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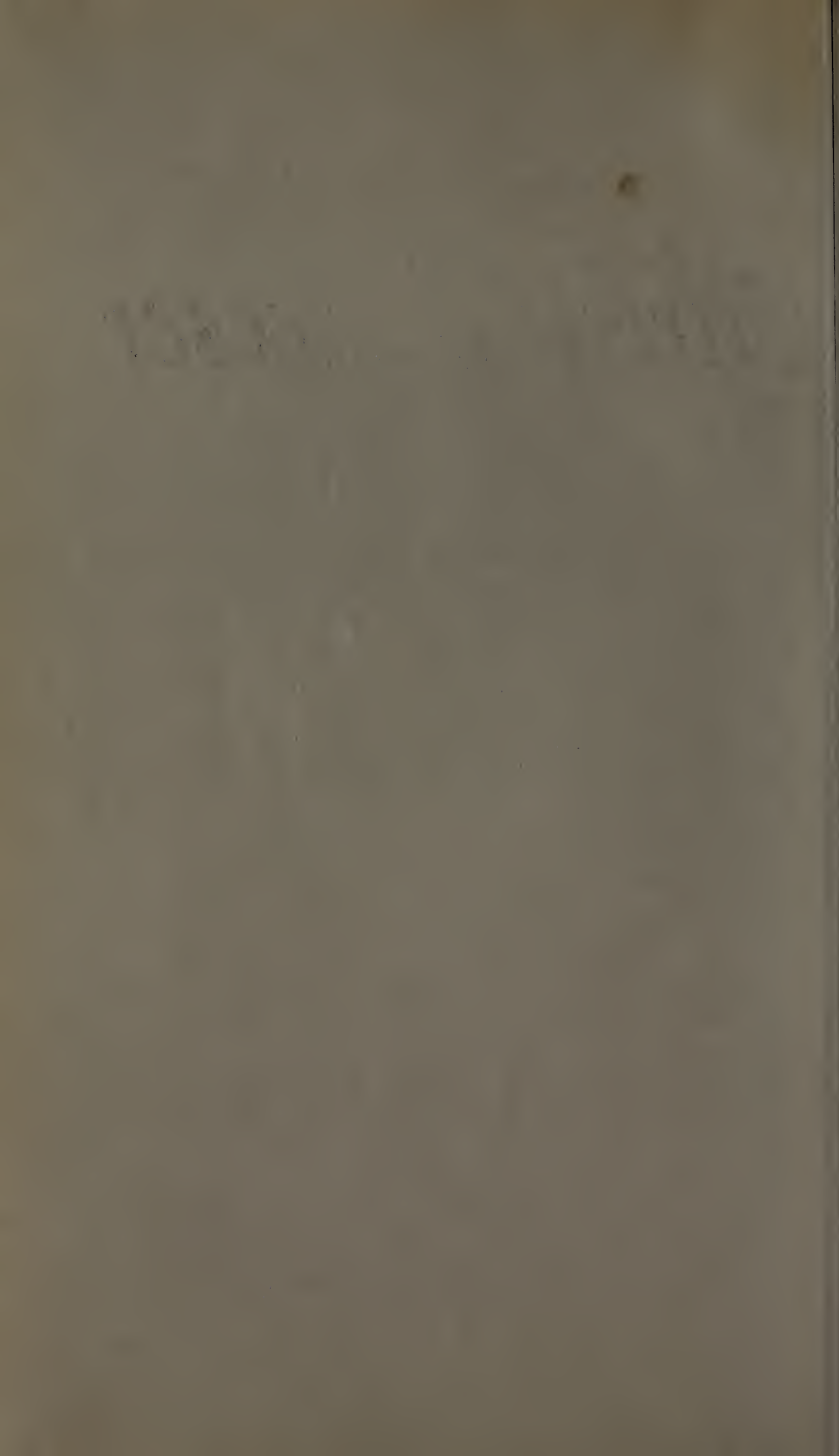
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Christian Reeser

THE STORY
OF A
CENTENARIAN

by

ETHEL REESER COSCO

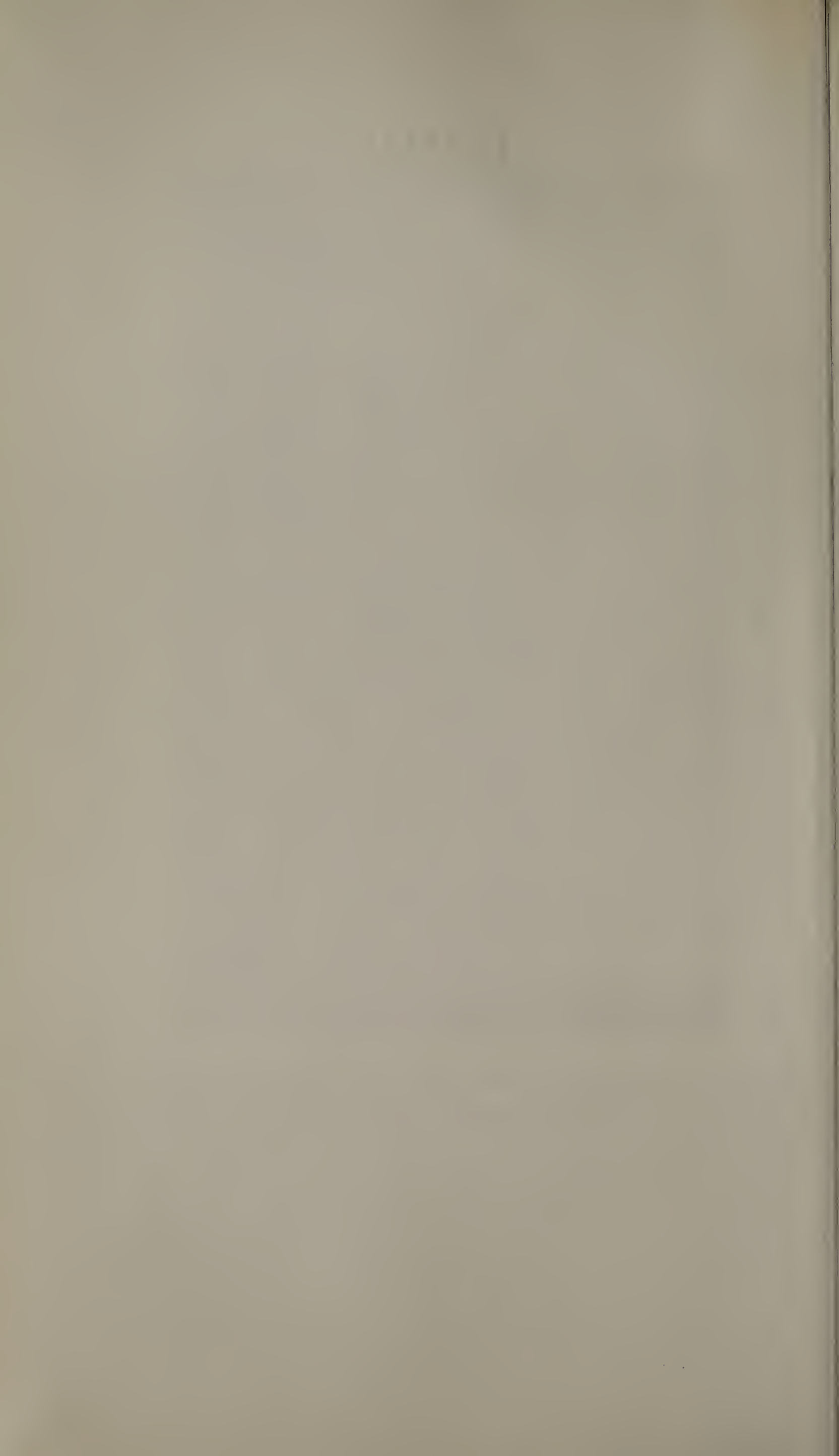


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"My sun is fast sinking; my days will be few; I still want to live them to the glory of Christ. It is years ago . . . I gave God my decision, and that was for life. In this faith I want to live, and in this faith I want to die; in this let no man seek to change my purpose."

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To Lena, Ben, Dave, and Pete,
Whose keen minds have recalled the story, this
book of their father is affectionately dedicated.

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PREFACE

The task of writing the biography of Christian Reeser was undertaken at the request of his living children. The fact that this man lived to be a centenarian further prompted the decision to record his life.

An attempt has been made to present the subject as a human being whose 100 years included failures as well as triumphs. It is hoped that an insight may be gained into the character of an energetic man who gave himself in unselfish service.

It has been difficult to try to depict a life witnessed only through the oral descriptions of those who knew Christian Reeser. It is hoped that factual mistakes or wrong emphasis will be excused in consideration of that hindrance.

Appreciation is given to the many people who supplied information to make the story possible; to Doris Neff and Lore Rittmayer for aid in tracing the European history of the family and for correcting the spelling of German words; to my sister, Mary Belle Vaughn, for the time and work entailed in getting the copies printed and distributed; and to my husband, Franco, for suggestions and encouragement in the preparation of the manuscript.

E.R.C.

CHAPTER I

FROM THE OLD COUNTRY

"Get thee out of thy country . . . from thy father's house . . . and I will bless thee . . . and thou shalt be a blessing."
Gen. 12 : 1, 2.

Christian Reeser was born in 1819, "around the middle of September." Since he did not know the exact date, he appropriated the fifteenth of that month as the date of his birth. That was the day generally used afterward for anniversary celebrations.

He was born in the province of Lorraine, in a little village called Gavanhusan, three miles from the larger village of Sargamene. The latter town can be found on most maps of Europe, just outside the border of the German Palatinate. It is east of the better-known city of Metz and is found by the modern spelling "Sarreguemines."

More important than the exact date and place of birth in determining the course of Christian Reeser's life, were such factors as his religious background, the political condition of his country, and the times in which he was born. His family belonged to a group known as Mennonites, whose history began in Switzerland during the Reformation Period. They shared, in common with other reformed churches, the great fundamental doctrines of Christianity such as belief in the triune God, the atoning work of Christ, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the resurrection and judgment in the world to come.

It was not these commonly accepted beliefs which determined the course of the lives of many Mennonites, and consequently, that of the subject of this biography. Rather, the persecutions they endured and the immigrations that followed, came as a result of three or four convictions which were neither shared nor tolerated by most of the people around them.

They accepted the Bible as the only source of authority for faith and life, and felt it was intended to be believed literally and its commandments obeyed without question. They further believed that the church was composed only of regenerated believers who were baptized voluntarily upon the confession of their faith. At the hand of the Catholic church, in particular, they were persecuted for these two beliefs.

In the matter of a literal interpretation of the Bible they laid emphasis on the ethical teachings of that book especially on Christ's Sermon on the Mount. That acceptance compelled them to follow a way of peace and love toward each other and toward their enemies to such an extent that they relinquished all use of force and violence both in times of war and peace. The Mennonites adopted a simple pattern of living that manifested itself in the avoidance of luxuries in food and clothes, titles and rank, and the display of any kind of vanity. They lived under a simple democracy of Christian brotherhood.

Although these people were extremely law-abiding in all respects, they lived the principle of nonresistance at the expense of barbarous persecution at the hand of Protestants and Catholics alike. A strange paradox of the time was seen when those Protestants who were being persecuted by Catholics for their new interpretation of Christianity, in turn inflicted persecution on those elements who differed with them.

This chain of intolerance was not perpetuated by the Mennonites because it was contrary to their understanding of the teachings of Jesus. Many of them suffered martyrdom, others were tortured and then released; some were able to escape and fled deep into the mountains of Switzerland or into the Southern part of Germany.

Among those who emigrated to the Palatinate were families by the name of Reeser. In this section, not far from where Christian was born, is an old estate which Herr Pietzch, a historian of Heidleberg, Germany, has told us was rented to three Reeser families who had come from Switzerland in 1757. The archives of the University at Heidleberg contains the document showing that this estate, known as "Mennoniten Hof," was rented to them by an electore of the German emperor.

A June, 1919, excerpt from the Daily Pantagraph (Bloomington, Illinois, newspaper), which featured Christian Reeser's "Ninety-Nine Years in the Mennonite Faith" says:

"He was born in Alsace-Lorraine where his father and grandfather before him were Mennonites. They came from Switzerland at the invitation of the great Napoleon Bonaparte . . ."

Since the remainder of this same article contains several apparent errors, the historical accuracy of the newspaper quotation is subject to question. It is the

opinion of the above-named historian that the Reesers had left Switzerland before Napoleon gained control of the French government. Although the dates of immigration from Switzerland to the Palatinate, and then, to Lorraine are uncertain, the record shows that Christian's father, John Reeser, was in the last-named place soon after the turn of the century. With the coming of Napoleon to power after 1799, conscription became a universal practice in most of the European countries. Napoleon showed his friendship toward the Mennonites by assigning them to noncombatant service in the French army. John Reeser was among those conscripted and, under the direction of the military, he assisted in the raising of food.

Several of the old newspaper accounts say that Christian Reeser was a Frenchman by birth. This was true only in the sense that he was born on soil owned by France. His father's family came from the German section of Switzerland and were of German blood; his mother came from Germany. He bore a German name which appears on various records in five different spellings — "Rieser," "Riesser," "Reiser," "Reisser," and "Risser." In America, all of the family except the descendants of Christian's eldest son, John have taken the English spelling "Reeser."

It is not difficult to understand why Christian was considered a Frenchman. Alsace-Lorraine bordered the west bank of the Rhine River, and being rich in minerals, had been a subject of dispute between French and German rulers since the ninth century. The entire region, therefore, contained elements of both the German and the French. At the time when Christian Reeser was born, the French influence was predominant for several reasons: the area had been ceded to France 122 years prior to his birth, also, the French Revolution had many many of the inhabitants truly French in spirit.

There is an idea existent among the descendants of Christian Reeser, that he and his brother, Joseph, were personally employed by Napoleon and that their sister, Mary, worked as a seamstress for his wife, Josephine. The little sewing kit that Mary later brought to America and which has been kept in the family is said to have been given her by the Emperor's wife.

While their father could have been personally employed by Napoleon it has been impossible to piece together any connection between the Emperor and the

Reeser children. Napoleon died in 1821, when Christian was less than two years old. His brother, John, who was born in 1811, was only ten years old at the time. There is no record of the birth date of Joseph, the only other brother of whose existence we are sure; nor is there a birth record of Mary, their sister. 1 Since their father died at the early age of 35 years, however, it is unlikely that Mary was old enough to have been a seamstress for Josephine before that woman's death in 1814.

The above-mentioned newspaper accounts shed some light on the possible origin of this mistaken rumor. It says,

"... For the first ten years of his life he (Christian) lived in Alsace-Lorraine, near the city of Metz. Then he moved with his parents to Southern France and lived on a farm owned by General Bertram, the right-hand man to Napoleon. 2 Those were the years when Louis Philip of France was encouraging agriculture. The first district fairs were started. The new mould-board plows were first being used and the farmers found that with two horses and the new plow they could do more work than with four horses and the old one.

"As a young man Christian took care of eight cows for three years, herding them all day long on the unfenced slopes of a stony country. After that, he herded sheep in the same open range, this time accompanied by two sheep dogs..."

Comte Henri Gratien Bertrand was a French army officer who had served as a general in Egypt under Napoleon I. Bertrand shared the defeated man's banishment to St. Helena but, upon Napoleon's death, returned to France. In 1830 he was appointed commandant of the

1. The author's grandfather, Jacob Reeser, told her before his death that his father had another brother who emigrated to French Canada and who never wrote back to the family. However, none of Christian's children who still remain can remember hearing their father refer to another brother.
2. Two other similar accounts say that the family moved to Southern France, near Bursch, when he was "still a baby," and "when yet a small boy." These newspaper clippings are undated but were written about the time Christian reached the century mark.

Polytechnique School in Southern France. It was under this man, and not Napoleon, that Christian and Joseph, and perhaps John Reeser, were employed about 1835. A granddaughter of Christian remembers hearing him say he was one of thirty men working on this experimental estate and that his particular job was to take care of the calves and the milking. His brother, Joseph, worked in the capacity of a gardener. It was probably for Bertrand's wife that Mary worked as a seamstress. The Reesers later recalled their experiences on the farm of Gen. Bertrand with a kind of nostalgic pleasure.

Though they enjoyed their work on this farm they began to be intrigued by stories of the favorable possibilities existing in America. Some of their friends had gone there and had returned to the old country to get married. Their stories whetted a desire in the Reesers to go and see the new land for themselves. The entire family began to make plans to emigrate to Canada.

But one day while the father was engaged in building, he received a severe blow on his head from a falling object and died soon afterward. This tragedy upset their plans for leaving but, left with a widowed mother to support, the brothers soon began to talk of it again. There was another reason that heightened their desire to leave their native land. One of the results of Napoleon's rule had been an increased nationalistic feeling throughout the countries of Europe. France was among those nations that instituted compulsory military training.

Although religious tolerance had greatly improved compared with that of several generations before, there was no assurance that it would continue. And while the Reesers were persuaded among themselves to endure any possible suffering that might come to them in their own land for obeying their consciences, they also felt there was nothing to prohibit them from leaving for America where the individual conscience was respected.

And so it was that in 1838 or 1839, when Christian was nineteen or twenty years old, the three brothers and their sister, Mary, took leave of their mother after promising to send for her as soon as they were settled. They set out on foot from Southern France for the port of Le Havre. Nicholas Maurer, an orphan boy of about fifteen years, went along with them. He wanted to go to the New World but did not have enough money to pay his ocean fare. He told his friends that he would repay them

if they would lend him the needed amount. This they did and, true to his word, the boy repaid them with the first money he earned in the new land.

At Le Havre the party boarded a sailboat which was scheduled to land in Canada on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River. It is not known just why they decided to locate in Canada but it is possible that relatives had gone there previously.³ Christian's brothers and sister stowed him on board the vessel, because he was of draft age at the time they left. It is not known how this was accomplished but he afterward told of coming out from hiding to pay his fare.

Christian always looked back on the voyage across the Atlantic as one of the most interesting adventures of his entire life. The sailboat was a small one, and because it encountered a number of severe storms, it drifted as far south as the equator. The day came when the boat was to have landed in Canada but it was spent far south of that northern dominion. The group experienced "sea calms" when almost no air stirred the sails. On one such occasion the boat stood still for twelve days in a spot where the weather was extremely hot.

All of the passengers had ample opportunity to become well-acquainted with each other and one of the most popular subjects of conversation was the possible date of landing. A rumor arose that the water supply was getting low, because of the fact that less and less water was given out to drink. Finally, it could no longer be kept secret that the supply was completely gone. The spirit of merriment and adventure that had pervaded the vessel when she pulled away from the European shore gave way to one of despair and hopelessness. The passengers almost ceased walking around the deck. In those few days they merely sat praying instead of talking with each other.

What happened next is a story that Christian Reeser loved to tell his grandchildren when they gathered around his rocking chair. Most of the people on the boat realized that their survival depended on a miracle and they prayed in great earnest. Their faith wrought a wonderful thing, according to his story, for on the horizon that same day storm clouds appeared and the downpour that soon followed gave them enough water to last the rest of the voyage.

This miraculous turn of events put a new spirit into the group. Soon after this the captain announced that the boat would dock in New Orleans before many days. This

news was received with cries of joy that rivaled their rejoicing when the rain had fallen. New Orleans was a long way from their original destination but after being tossed about on the water for two months no one seemed to care where he would be asked to step on land. The Reeser brothers immediately began to make plans to go up the Mississippi River to Butler County in Ohio, where some of their friends had settled several years before.

The captain, like the others, was anxious to disembark, but for a special reason. From the first day on board he had been attracted to Mary Reeser who was a beautiful girl with curly, black hair. In all these weeks of crossing he had had many spare hours. These he spent with her and the two young people grew to love each other. Mary promised the captain that she would wait for him in New Orleans while he returned to Le Havre to resign his job as commander of the boat and then they would be married.

They announced their plans about the same time that signs of land began to appear. The passengers were already excited about landing but they received the news of the betrothal with pleasure and surprise. There was one person on board, however, who heard it with neither pleasure or surprise; he was Herr Paul Deutsch, a German tailor, on his way to the new country to establish a business. He had been making his own plans concerning the beautiful and accomplished seamstress. He was therefore, a very unhappy man when he came in sight of the new land, but he determined that he would still win the young girl.

CHAPTER II

TO THE NEW WORLD

"Get you up this way . . . and see the land, what it is . . . whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein or not." Numbers 13 : 17, 20.

Sixty-nine days after leaving Le Havre the sailboat docked at New Orleans. Its French influence attracted the Reeser party. The brothers felt it their duty to remain with their sister in this city, until her fiance, the captain, should return. The first few days waiting passed quickly as they watched ocean vessels being unloaded and loaded again with products from this new land. They were greatly interested in the strange above-ground burial vaults which they learned were necessary because the city had been built below the level of the river.

After they had seen most of the sights, time began to drag for the boys and their friend Nick. If it took the boat as long to go to Europe and back as it had to come over, they reasoned, the captain might not return for four-and-a-half months. They became restless at the idea of sitting idle in a country where one could become wealthy in a very short time.

Meanwhile the afore-mentioned admirer of Mary, Mr. Deutsch, associated himself with the waiting party. Now that the captain was out of sight he did all he could to make himself desirable. Because the man possessed a magnetic, persuasive personality, it did not take long to convince the young girl she would be much happier with him than the captain.

Her brothers tried to prevent the marriage. They disliked his domineering attitude and smooth speech. He was a catholic, a fact which could give rise to many disagreements. Because this man was a tailor by trade they suspected that he wanted their sister for her sewing ability and the economic possibilities involved, more than he wanted her love. Christian's misgivings about the matter were so strong that he declared such a marriage would result only in bad luck and regret. He pleaded with his sister but in the end the tailor's tactics won. The brothers took sad leave of Mary and secured a job working their way up the river to Cincinnati on a flatboat. They made their way to a nearby rural settlement of Mennonites in Butler County. Here, as they had hoped,

they found recent immigrants with whom they had been acquainted in Europe.

As nearly as can be ascertained, it was in the summer of 1839 when they arrived in Butler County.³ Their friend, Maurer, immediately struck out on foot for Illinois with a friend, one John Strubhar. The Reeser brothers decided to make some kind of footing in that area where they knew people until such a time when they could look over the land situation elsewhere. At first they hired themselves out as farm hands to a Mr. Shertz for \$10. per month. Christian later spoke of that employer as a man who urged them not to work too hard but, on the other hand, to get a lot done. He often amusedly quoted Mr. Shertz, who said, one morning when he set them to work cutting a good-sized wheat field by hand, "Now take it easy, boys, but remember that this patch has 'to' be cut today!"

He spoke more favorably of Mrs. Shertz who was an exceptionally beautiful woman. In answer to the question sometimes put to her as to why she happened to marry a man as homely as Mr. Shertz she would quietly reply, "If you looked at him through my eyes, you'd think him to be handsome." She made the boys some clothes during the time they worked there and acted in the capacity of a mother so well that they never forgot her.

Within a few years John and Joseph married. Joseph had four children—John, Mary, Josephine, and Kathryn. His wife, whose name is not known, died following the birth of the last child. Soon afterward, the bereaved father decided to accept an invitation from his brother-in-law, Paul Deutsch, to come to New Orleans for a visit. When he left, he asked Christian to watch after his children and his dog. One evening sometime later, Joe's dog went down to the railroad tracks and howled there all night. Christian, who had tried to discourage his brother

3. Dr. Weber, in his Centennial History of the Menonites of Illinois, Historical Society, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, 1931, has put Christian Reeser and Maurer's coming to Ohio ten years earlier. (P. 78) At that date, they would have been eleven and nine years old, respectively when they arrived. All the records and testimonies of living children of both men bear out this mistake.

from having anything to do with Deutsch, predicted that something tragic was happening to Joe. His suspicions were confirmed not long afterward when Mr. Deutsch came to Ohio and told them Joe had died of yellow fever in New Orleans. The date of his death was significant in that it was the same day on which Joe's dog had acted in such a strange manner.

Their brother-in-law told them that Joe had asked him to arrange a fit burial in one of the above-ground vaults which the Reesers had marveled at when they arrived in New Orleans. In exchange for that consideration the dying man gave Deutsch permission to keep anything he wished of his property. Accordingly, he began to settle Joe's affairs, packing what he decided to keep and selling the rest in a hurried fashion. After observing Joe's four orphaned children he selected Katie, whom he had decided appeared the brightest of the four. He explained that it would cost him too much money to raise all of them, and without much further delay he left, taking Katie, the confiscated belongings, and the money from items he had sold.

John and Christian were so stunned by the news of their brother's unexpected death that they were almost unaware of what had happened until after their brother-in-law had made his exit. They began to be skeptical about Joe having granted his belongings to Deutsch but were helpless to do anything about it. Up to this time, their sister, Mary had written in an unhappy tone. When her former fiance, the sea-captain returned to New Orleans and heard what had happened, he threatened to kill Paul Deutsch. She was forced to go into hiding with her husband until the angry, frustrated sailor took to the sea once more.

With a bitter heart she worked beautiful buttonholes in the suits her husband tailored. She admitted that their relationship was no more happy than her brothers had predicted it would be. John and Christian's uneasiness over her marriage was deepened after the death of Joe. In the years that followed they eagerly awaited each letter from her. She gave birth to four children—Isabelle, Clara, Elizabeth, and Eugene. At forty-three Mary died, the beautiful sister to whom life in the new world had once looked so promising.

Only John and Christian now remained. Since they were now settled in America they sent for their mother

in Europe as they had said they would when they took leave of her. She bought her fare with the money they had sent and soon was on her way to the new world to spend her remaining days near them. It is possible she helped raise the children of her deceased son, Joseph. John, the oldest child of Joseph, died of croup when he was ten years old. It is thought that the two sisters married in Ohio and continued to live there. After several years the widowed mother married a Mr. Bowers.

Soon after their arrival in Butler County, Ohio, the Reesers became acquainted with a man named Elias Kumler. "Liz," as everyone called him, had, in 1839, purchased 320 acres of land in Delaware County, Indiana, for \$1550.00. The piece of land was part of a 360-acre tract which one George Dichey had bought from the government on August 20, 1838, ". . . according to a provision of the Act of Congress of the 24th of April, 1820, entitled 'An Act to make further provision of the sale of Public Lands'."

"Liz" Kumler continued to live in Ohio even though he had purchased land in Indiana. He hired the two Reeser brothers to work for him after they had finished their term of employment with Mr. Shertz. In October, 1842, he sold his Indiana property to them for \$1,240.00. It is not known whether they had saved that amount of money in three or four years and paid cash for the land. While John evidently moved into the one log cabin which was on the place at the time they bought it, Christian continued to work in Ohio for about six more years, possibly to finish paying for the place. Their mother and step-father subsequently moved to Indiana at which place their mother died. Each winter Christian made a trip to Indiana to visit his family, gliding over the snow in a sled which he had fashioned from the curved fork of a tree. It was pulled by a horse he had named "Fox" because it was fleet of foot.

In his old age he often told of the good times he enjoyed with other young people of the Butler County settlement. There he began to think of the need of getting married and he started to keep company with one of "Liz's" daughters. While he was courting her he went to a fortune teller to have his future read. According to the story he retold many times in later years, this woman said to him, "You are now interested in a certain girl but you will not

marry her. Another man is also interested in her and he will get her because he has more money than you. Your wife will be a girl who is still in Germany."

Time very shortly proved the truth of the woman's prediction about the girl he was courting. In about the year 1847, Christian left his friends in Butler County and set out, a single man, to join John in Indiana and pioneer that part of the great country which belonged to him.

"Yep, you should get the cage before the bird. Grandfather Reeser used to admonish his grandchildren from his rocking chair, and always added, with an emphatic tap of his cane, "That's the way I did it." He pretended not to hear when his wife explained that the cage was a very dirty one, with a large, greasy spot in the middle of the floor when she took it over. Then he would continue with the story of how he built the little log house by hard work and patience.

He hewed enough oak and beech logs by hand to erect a cabin about 17 by 19 feet. From a nearby stream he brought clay which he mixed with slaked lime and filled in around oak chips placed in the cracks between the logs. The logs were hewn on four sides so that they were square. Each side measured approximately ten inches across. This was the German method of building a log house; the Scandinavian method was to use round logs.

There were two rooms, one on the ground floor and one above. The second-story floor of squared logs was covered with boards he had planed at the nearest sawmill. This floor, which he built about seven feet from the ground, contains wooden pins almost an inch in diameter. These he had carved by hand in the evenings when it was too dark to work outside. To the left of the only doorway entrance rose a steep stairs made of planed boards. He put one window on each end of the downstairs room; the second story boasted three. A slanted roof of planed clapboards crowned his first piece of carpentry in the New World. It still stands, over a century old, near Parker, Indiana.

As a site for his cabin Christian had chosen a spot where the growth of trees was not so abundant, but that had been hard to find. The lush growth of timber on the place fascinated him. He liked trees and the idea of cutting down more than necessary did not meet his approval.

Many interesting wild animals lived in his woods and he loved to watch them. When he was felling trees for his cabin one day he was delighted to see a deer peep out from the undergrowth, approach cautiously, and nibble tender top leaves from the far end of a tree he had felled.

The cage was ready! Where was he to find the bird? The work of building the house and clearing some land left Christian little time to become lonesome for awhile. His Sundays and some of the long evenings were spent with John's family or at one of the Zimmermans, neighbors who had bought sections of timber land. The homelike atmosphere of these German households both assuaged and intensified the loneliness that Christian felt. His cabin seemed too empty and void of life. After all, he reasoned, he was past thirty years old and he had a place to keep a wife. Why shouldn't he marry? He decided that as soon as it snowed he would hitch Fox to the curved-fork sled and head back to Ohio to look for a wife.

Ohio, however, was not predestined to be the locale for this romantic episode. In fact, it took place much nearer home. After working with Fox at some distance from his cabin, one day, he decided to ask for a drink for his horse and himself at one of the nearby Zimmermans'. As soon as he turned into the lane he saw a young woman washing clothes over a tub beneath a tree in the yard. When he drew near she looked up and the face he saw was an unusually beautiful one. Christian's heart skipped a beat when she spoke a greeting. Her use of the German language made him recall the prediction of the fortune teller. In answer to his fast-put questions, he learned that she had, indeed, come from Germany but recently. He learned that her name was Barbara Zimmerman and that she was a sister of his neighbors. The girl offered to give Fox a drink and that reminded him of his original reason for turning in at the place. Christian was so attracted to the girl that he tried to think of some excuse for staying longer. Like an answer to prayer Barbara's brother stepped outside and invited him to stay for a barn warming that evening. Christian accepted without hesitation.

Christian and Barbara were married on April 25, 1882, when he was thirty-three and she was twenty-one. The marriage did not take place as soon after their first

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Christian and Barbara were married on April 25, 1852, when he was thirty-three and she was twenty-one. The marriage did not take place as soon after their first

meeting as he had anticipated, because the matter of persuading her was much more difficult than he had thought it would be. When Christian asked her to marry him soon after their first meeting, she told him that she was already engaged to another man.

Barbara was born in Baden, Germany, on April 4, 1831, the daughter of an upper class family. Her parents sent her to school from the time she was very young until just before she came to America, an uncommon thing in the days when the few girls who were privileged to go to school attended only a few years. Her education was of the "finishing-school" type. A sampler handed down in the family is an example of the fine type of embroidery she learned in school at an early age.

Evidently Barbara, at the age of twenty, left her pleasant, easy life in Germany against her parents' wishes. It was in Germany that she had become engaged. Afterward, the man went to Philadelphia to start a business. He wrote to Barbara, offering to send the money for her ocean fare if she would come to the wonderful new land. She finally accepted his offer on the condition that he would wait to marry her until she had earned enough money to repay him.

Once in Philadelphia Barbara was tempted to give in to the pleas of her fiance that they should be married immediately, but her determined nature compelled her to abide by her original decision to repay him first. In view of the fact that she secured a job that paid only one dollar per week it is surprising she did not yield to her fiance's wishes. In a short time the girl began to regret that she had ever crossed the ocean. She found her work difficult; it entailed doing the housework for a family of fourteen and she was accustomed to an altogether different life.

When she felt she could stand such drudgery no longer she secured a slightly better position with a tailor in the same city. But homesickness overswept the poor girl. The longing to return home was greater than her desire to stay near her fiance; however, she was too proud to borrow money for the return fare. When a letter came from her brothers in Indiana asking her to visit them and to work for them until she married, she immediately accepted their invitation. So Barbara left her disappointed fiance after having promised to come back in several months.

And so it was an already engaged girl who captivated

the heart of Christian Reeser. She liked him a lot, however, especially his optimistic outlook and perennial sense of humor. Barbara's brothers were very fond of their bachelor neighbor and they preferred that she marry him and settle near them. They reminded her that Christian was a member of the same religious denomination as she, a fact that was not true of her present fiancé. The man in Philadelphia was barely started in his business while Reeser had already begun to put his fine piece of land under cultivation. These favorable recommendations of Christian's virtues caused Barbara to give the matter serious thought. Before the remainder of her debt was earned she had decided in favor of him although she declined to marry him until she had paid back her first fiancé the money she owed him.

Christian and Barbara were married in Muncie, Indiana, ten miles from the log cabin. On the way home the newly-wed's buggy was caught in a severe rainstorm. It was difficult for Fox to make his way over the muddy roads and so they did not reach the cabin til ten o'clock that night. It had rained all the way and Christian's new blue serge suit was drenched by the deluge as he unhitched the horse. But he was happy, now that he had a bird for his cage!

The little log house took on a new appearance in the pleasant days that followed. It became more than a house to Christian; his bride's touch had transformed it into a home. The clean floors and bedding, the bright touches of flowers by the doorway, the warm meals that awaited him—how contrasting was this to the former, barren life! And yet none of these blessings equalled the joy of seeing the bright smile that lighted up her beautiful face when he came home from a day in the woods. He thanked God for the warmth of companionship and the joy of sharing.

However, he also found that even married life in the new land was not without its problems. It was difficult for Barbara to become completely adjusted to the rugged atmosphere of pioneer life. Although as a man, he found it easier to conceal his feelings, Christian was sometimes discouraged, too. The richly timbered land was theirs, but what more? It would take a long time to clear enough land to enable him to bring in little more than the bare necessities of living. The small cabin easily held the few pieces of furniture which he laboriously fashioned by hand during the long winter evenings. He realized that

his wife's education had not prepared her to accept the meagerness of that kind of life with calm assurance and complacency.

It was especially difficult for Barbara to stay at home alone on the long evenings of those days when Christian took a wagon load of birch switches to town. The birches were sold for outside rims to reinforce barrel staves, and were one of the few sources of cash which allowed the occasional purchase of a piece of cloth or a pair of shoes. Sometimes they were accepted as a medium of trade for those articles of food which could not be produced at home. One late afternoon, only halfway home on such a trip, his wagon broke down beyond immediate repair. After building a fire to ward off wild animals Christian spent the remainder of the night beneath his wagon. The howling of wolves beyond the light of the fire and the thought of Barbara, alone with her unborn child, made sleep impossible. He found her quite safe the next day but extremely worried.

Discouraged moods did not continually possess the young wife. She revealed an ability to make the best of her situation and showed a strong determination to persist. She anticipated the day when the wilderness surrounding the little log house would be conquered. And with little Johannes in her arms about a year after their marriage, a deep sense of security and belonging began to creep into her being.

However, this feeling was not destined to remain there long, for Christian had heard rumors of a railroad to be built westward through the local region in the near future, possibly through their very own land, and he became much engrossed in these stories. Barbara listened with disapproval to his calculations regarding the increased value of the land if the railroad offered to buy it. His musing on this subject was always followed by hopeful speculation on the chances for getting ahead faster out in Illinois where Nick Maurer had already acquired a large piece of rich acreage.

Barbara hoped the talk was only a rumor, but one day several men come to the cabin and introduced themselves as representatives of the Cincinnati, New Castle, and Michigan Railroad Company. Her husband, who was always delighted with the prospect of an exchange of conversation with acquaintance or stranger alike, greeted the men with pleasurable anticipation.

However, he soon noticed his wife appraising them with the same kind of look she would have given them, had they come to set the cabin on fire. She was aware of the fact that the hardships of life in the new land increased as one moved westward. Her log cabin, a homely contrast to the spacious comfortable-looking farmhouses, she had seen outside Philadelphia, now seemed altogether likeable in view of a possible existence in a cave dugout or skin teepee on the Illinois prairies.

As she had feared, the men took with them an agreement carrying the signature of the Reesers when they left that evening. Barbara, in her beautiful German script, had signed for her husband because he could not write well. "My hand trembled as I took the pen in hand," she used to say, "but I thought to myself, 'It was his lard long before I married him and since he wants to sell so badly, why should I stand in the way?'"

When it became apparent, in the months which followed, that Christian was among those in the neighborhood who had fallen victim to a scandalous land-buying scheme, he wished his wife had objected more strongly. The circumstances surrounding that railroad swindle are still a mystery to the family. Neither Christian nor his wife ever enlarged upon it, probably because they themselves understood little of what actually happened. The deed to this land gives us no insight into the matter. It merely states that "Christian Reiser and wife Barbara Reiser (sold) to the Cincinnati, New Castle and Michigan Railroad Company, for \$2,400 on October 8, 1853, 120 acres."

It is certain Christian never received one cent of the promised \$2,400. The idea of taking the matter to court was against his religious principles. It is not known whether he attempted in any other way to recover his land. Years later, one of his sons made an effort to investigate the matter but without favorable results.

In 1854, a little over a year after this disheartening experience, Anna Marie was added to the family. By this time, the parents had become reasonably adjusted to their loss. They took some comfort in the fact that they had not sold all of their property. Besides his half of the 320 acres he and John had originally purchased from Mr. Kumler in 1842, Christian had acquired an additional 120 acres, which, according to the deed, he had bought from his brother in 1847. Fortunately, the log house was on

the 160 acres which still belonged to him. Christian continued to work at the seemingly endless task of clearing trees from the property which remained. But he lost much of his interest in improving the place after his old friend, Nick Maurer, on a trip east to get married, told him more about the wonderful possibilities out in Illinois. There clear springs obliterated the task of digging wells, the land was cheaper, the soil richer, and the timber not as dense. He insisted that if a suitable method could be found for draining the prairies, which needed no clearing at all, those rich lands could be farmed for little more than the asking.

This contemplated move was given more fore-thought than the last one and it was not until September of 1857 that the most precious belongings were carried from the log house and placed in a covered wagon. Barbara held her three-weeks-old Joseph in her arms as they drove away. She refrained from looking back at the little cabin among the trees. To do so would bring forth tears. The future had to be faced, and for the sake of her three small children she was determined to meet it with courage. It was comforting to know that John and his family were venturing forth with them.

The oxen-drawn wagons of the two families frequently had to back-track to the right trail. The weather was hot that fall and good resting places with water were not frequently found. The pioneer spirit of the entire group was put to a severe test one crucial evening after they had traveled a long distance without any water to drink. They went on in the darkness, hoping the oxen would lead them to a spring or creek. When no water had been found by midnight they made preparations to camp for the night. With one accord they gathered in a group before retiring and asked God to supply the need that each one so sorely felt.

For several hours, Baby Joe cried in protest when he was unsuccessful in his attempts to draw milk from his mother's breast. It was especially difficult for Barbara to sleep. When sleep did come, it overtook the group so soundly that no one heard the early morning answer to their midnight prayer. But Christian's first conscious breathing told him there was moisture in the air, and a hurried glance outside the canvass door-flap revealed a wet prairie. He chided himself for not having had enough faith to put pans or buckets on the ground to

catch the rain! However, when he walked back over the trail they had covered the night before, he saw something that gladdened his disappointment. Stepping back to the wagon, he quietly hunted out a cup and stole outside again. He stooped down by a place where the oxen's hoofs had made a deep imprint in the soft earth and carefully scooped up a cupful of the clear surface water. Then he woke his wife and gave her the water that she needed more than anything else at the moment.

Enough water was obtained in this way to enable each member of the party to go on, and not many days afterward, the covered wagons entered Woodford County, Illinois. No one seemed anxious to go any further. Although in years to come, Christian was enticed with stories of good, cheap land farther west, Barbara let it be known that that was the last time in her life she would be persuaded to move.

CHAPTER III

HOME ON THE MACKINAW

"And he will love thee, and . . . will bless . . . the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep . . . Deut. 7 : 13.

Once in Woodford County, Illinois, the two Reese families made their way to Montgomery township where the Maurers cordially welcomed them. Nicholas had never forgotten their kindness to him when he was a poor orphan. He hoped they would settle on land near his farm so that he could more easily aid them in the task of getting a new start. However, John decided to look for land nearer Peoria and eventually bought 160 acres near that town. Christian set out with Nicholas to inspect some land in Woodford County.

Like earlier settlers before him, Mr. Maurer had chosen land adjacent to a river in preference to the prairies. At that early time the prairies were looked upon by many as waste land, even though they yielded a profusion of wild flowers and grass. But by 1858, some of the settlers had discovered the fertility of this land which today is considered to be some of the richest farming soil in the United States.

Christian's decision not to buy prairie soil was not, therefore, a result of ignorance of the fertility of that kind of land. He decided against a prairie farm because it was bare of trees. This meant there was no shade for the livestock and no timber for building material. Furthermore, flies were pests in some areas because no suitable method had been found for draining the swamps.

His friend showed him a forty-acre tract within a mile or two of his own farm. It had a nice stand of timber, black and white oak, burr oak, hickory, sycamore, walnut, and enough other varieties to guarantee the right kind of wood for any possible need. Two small buildings, a log house and a stable, had been erected on the southern end of the place. Here the ground rose high enough to give a good view of the land sloping all the way down to the Mackinaw River. Beyond the river rose tall cedar trees and high cliffs which later came to be known as Cedar Bluffs.

Christian purchased this land from a Mr. Vicebrought not many weeks after their arrival. It did not take them long to transfer their few possessions from the wagon to the small building, and immediately they settled down to the serious task of extracting a living from land that had been only partly cleared.

The stable was in bad need of repair—so much so, that for the first while the cow given to them by Mr. Maurer had to be kept in the donor's own barn. And one of the very first evenings Barbara became aware of the limitations of the house. An unusually severe rainstorm came up late one afternoon when Christian had crossed the river to make the first necessary purchases in the nearest town. This storm disclosed the fact that the roof was full of small holes. The wind ripped at it unmercifully until the distraught woman had difficulty in finding a dry spot large enough for her to huddle with the baby, the candle, and her two clinging, crying children. The situation called for relief in tears and it was in this state that Mr. Maurer found her when he arrived to offer help. He assured her that her husband's absence meant he had made a wise decision to remain at a neighbor's house for the night, due to a rapid rise in the river. The rain subsided presently and the good neighbor helped the woman and her children get settled in a dry place for the remainder of the night.

Having fully established the need for better shelter, Christian set about for the second time to build a house. No record tells us just when this house was started, but it was supposedly erected the first winter. Building probably went on at a slow pace because there were other urgent things which needed to be done at the same time. A boat had to be made for crossing the river, a well dug near the house, stumps removed, ground broken, and seeds planted.

Gin, a white mare of Morgan stock, helped in these jobs. This horse was later ridden to Slabtown by one of the boys at too fast a pace. The quick heating and rapid cooling caused trouble in her legs and eventually reduced her usefulness. However, Gin was always remembered and respected for her valuable assistance in the early development of the farm. She dragged logs to the nearest sawmill; she drew the wagon of rough lumber homeward; she pulled the sled bearing "niggerheads", the name given to large, black rocks used in making the foundation.

Gradually, there evolved a two-storied, four-roomed house which remained relatively unchanged for many years. Although later additions completely changed the outward appearance, the original house as it was when they were children is well remembered by those who are still living. Christian divided the ground floor into two rooms, a small bedroom and a larger kitchen. The kitchen boasted a pine floor which Barbara kept as white as possible by much scrubbing. This room was used for many purposes besides the preparation and eating of food. A table with its surrounding benches stood opposite the large, black cooking range and the huge woodbox and there, on long winter evenings, every possible piece of equipment that could be fashioned with human hands was made for house and barn. One evening would witness the finishing of a rolling pin; another, the fashioning of a harness from a piece of home-tanned leather. The younger boys learned how to make a finger stall from a piece of tanned squirrel's hide. Lead bullets were molded and guns repaired and cleaned to take care of wolves that had begun to kill the sheep. And here, under the light of a kerosene lamp, the Bible and a few other books were read and reread; arguments and discussions were carried on.

If there was any time in the summer for relaxing in a chair, this was done on the porch which ran the full length of the front of the house. Later, Christian decided to partition off one end of the porch as a small room for vagabonds who asked for a place to sleep in the barn. Up to that time his conscience never allowed him to slumber soundly in his own bed while a stranger within his gates was sleeping on straw. Barbara wanted to use the other end of the porch, which was near the kitchen, for a pantry; this, too, was enclosed with a wall and fitted on three sides with shelves.

As the family grew larger, the older children began to sleep in the two small rooms upstairs. The downstairs bedroom contained, in addition to the beds, a small heater, a wooden chest, and later on, a sewing machine. The chest had been made by Mr. Bowers, the step-father of Christian who came to live with them in Illinois. Family valuables, including cash, were usually kept in this chest. At the time Christian was skeptical about the idea of keeping money in the bank. The mattress is also said to have been the hiding place for money. There were no

closets built in the bedrooms; instead the walls were dotted with wooden pegs on which the clothes were hooked.

The cellar was a very important part of the building, serving the purposes fulfilled today by home freezing units and kitchen cupboards. It was entered from the outside of the house and was divided into two parts. In the first room they built shelves on which to lay winter apples and a place to store cider and wine. A potato bin was constructed in the corner of the other room. The sauerkraut barrel was set up in that room because it was darker than the other one. A fat-burning, pitcher-type lamp with a wick in the spout was used to light the way into the cellar after dark.

For many years the yard was enclosed by a hand-split rail fence. Christian chose to flank the front gate with a woodpile on one side and the "slop" barrel on the other. The prominence given this last mentioned item was not fully appreciated by all the members of the family as they grew older, but no amount of persuasion on the part of his daughters ever induced their father to move it from the place where he had originally set it.

The twenty years that followed their arrival in Illinois were years full of hard work and a lot of changes. In that many years ten more children were added to the family—Christian, in 1859; Fannie in 1861; Barbara, in 1863; Jacob, in 1865; Samuel, in 1867; Magdalena, in 1869; Benjamin, in 1871; David, in 1873; and a pair of twins, Peter and Andrew, in 1877. Such an increase in the size of the family required a similar increase in the size of the farm and further improvement of the land. Additional pieces of bordering land were purchased gradually, usually forty acres at a time. With the last addition of 80 acres, Christian owned a total of 296 acres. A larger barn, a summer kitchen, a woodshed, a smoke-house, a hog shed, and other outer buildings were erected.

Even though the children were obliged to do much of the work in the fields at a very young age, there was so much to be done that Barbara spent long days outside, especially during the first ten years. She still helped bind grain as late as the time when Jacob was a baby. This job was rendered more difficult for her because she carried him on her back, tied there with a piece of an old sheet. No one could be spared from the harvest to care for him and she would not let him lie on the ground because of the numerous snakes. But this situation im-

proved with time, when they were able to hire several men during the busiest season.

Dave gives us a description of one harvesting day during boyhood that stands out in his memory.

"Pa was reaping with a self-rake reaper, a Kirby pulled with horses. It raked off the grain, and four men in the field tied it, when it come off, with straw twine. Jim Garrison was a fast tier. He'd get his section done ahead of the rest and then turn a handspring or two until the rest caught up with him. Sam and Jake was helping him; Ben and I was herding seventy-five or a hundred hogs down by the river. It was a dry season and we had to take them every day. It was hot and we went in swimmin'. Well, the hogs got in the corn and when Pa seen them that ended the swimmin' for a long time!"

Although the Mackinaw River was an asset to the farm in several ways, it was a source of trouble because it sometimes flooded the rich bottom land. The heavy, sudden rains that caused flooding were often unpredictable. And so, those who cultivated corn during the day always took care to leave the cultivator on one of the higher spots of ground at the end of the day. One morning following a heavy down-pour, Sam and Joe looked across the water-covered field to see only the tops of the two small cultivators they had been using the day before. After wading out into the field as far as possible, they swam into the swirling waters and retrieved the cultivators in the nick of time.

Farming on the Reeser place was as diversified as the climate and soil would allow. The family enjoyed raising a variety of things. Then, too, it was a necessity because the distance from town and the poor transportation demanded a self-sustaining type of existence. Once the farm began to be developed, the family never lacked plenty of good food. A greater problem was that of acquiring cash to pay for land and to buy those items which could not easily be gotten by trading. This money gradually came from a number of sources. Milk from the seven or eight cows was kept in large crocks in the pantry. The skimmed milk was fed to the pigs and chickens, while the cream was churned and sold once a week in Eureka. Corn and other grains not needed for the livestock were sometimes sold for money, but the largest source of cash came through the sale of pigs and cattle.

To raise the food and livestock was one thing, to

market them was another problem. The nearest place where business could be done was at a point several miles to the west at an early French settlement known as Farneysville. Later, it came to be called Slabtown and today is known as Mackinaw Dells. A newspaper obituary of "Grandma" Klopfenstein, one of its early residents and a friend of the Reeser family, contains the following description of Farneysville:

"The principal industries in the town were a 'grist' mill, a brewery, and a distillery. Settlers drove for many miles to this mill, bringing the wheat and corn to have ground into flour or meal. Fish were plentiful in the Mackinaw at that time and usually while waiting for the 'grist' the farmer would 'slip up the creek' and with a pole, line and hook, catch a string of the finny tribe to carry home. The mill was finally superseded by the larger and better equipt flouring mills that were built in the larger towns. The brewery and distillery were eventually destroyed by fire and 'Farneysville' gradually went into decay.

" 'Grandma' says the timber lands along the Mackinaw abounded with wolves at that time and one morning when she went to the horse stable to get some cobs there was a large wolf lying in the horse manger."

Although the Reesers' mail was picked up here, and some business carried on, more trading went on at Roanoke and Eureka. And every fall and spring, a trip was made to Washington where a load of wheat was ground into flour at Andrew's mill. Usually, they brought back twenty sacks of flour and several bags of bran, which were given free. The boy who got to go along to help load and unload, considered himself fortunate. The distance often necessitated an over-night stay, adding to the novelty of the occasion.

The best market, of course, was Peoria, a settlement on the Illinois River, begun in 1829 and formerly called Fort Clark. Since the roads were poor and the trip with horse and wagon was a long and tiresome one, it was seldom taken in the first years. Whenever they were able to go, the privilege of visiting with John and his family increased the enjoyment of the trip.

The continual influx of people into the state brought forth demands for better roads and railroads. Marketing facilities greatly improved when a railroad was built through Eureka and Roanoke in the 1860's. Nevertheless,

until a bridge was finally built across the Mackinaw toward the end of the century, it was difficult for the Reeser family to reach town. It was necessary either to ford the river or to go the long distance over an unspeakably poor road to where there was a bridge.

The year-round job of providing for food was especially heavy from early spring through the fall. Christian always planted a large garden and usually put it near the barn, north of the lane. Rows of onions, lettuce, radishes and peas were planted early; cucumbers, cabbages, several varieties of beans, corn, potatoes, pumpkins and turnips followed. In fact, almost every vegetable was there that can be found in the same vicinity today, with the exception, perhaps, of tomatoes. It is said that Grandpa Reeser was standing with friends at a point along the Mississippi River when he was given his first tomato to taste, and after taking one bite, he threw it out as far as he could and declared it was all he ever wanted of that fruit.

In those days, when vegetable canning was considered unsafe and home freezing was unheard of, there were still numerous ways of preparing foods for winter consumption. As far into the winter as possible, Barbara depended on carrots, cabbage, and turnips which she and the children had buried deep in a sunken barrel in the garden to keep from freezing. Squash and pumpkins kept well in the cold cellar and were baked in their skins and eaten with butter or were made into pies, far into the winter. She pickled beets and cucumbers and made mixed relishes. These, together with horseradish, took the place of salads when the garden no longer produced fresh vegetables.

The children learned how to weave together, long strings of onions which they threw over an upstairs rafter. Here too, they tied flour sacks filled with dried foods, each one representing long hours of summer work. The dried corn was delicious after being soaked in water and cooked with salt, a little sugar, and plenty of thick cream or butter. Another bag of dried beans was the source of many meals of a thick bean soup, flavored with ham butts or "speck." Whole string beans were dried too, and prepared in a way similar to the corn. Then there were the dried fruits; peach, apricot, and apple

"snitches." That tiresome task of peeling sacks of apples was lightened considerably after an apple-peeling machine was purchased. Most of these foods were dried by being spread on mosquito netting placed over spaced laths in the hot summer sun.

Many sacks of apples went into apple-butter. The children stirred gallons of it as it simmered slowly in a large open kettle. Apple-butter was the main sweet spread for "every day." A smaller amount of grape jelly and fruit jams and marmalades were made and placed on the pantry shelves for "company" dinners. The making of cider and wine were annual fall events, engaging Christian's time the same days when Barbara was "putting up jell." He was considered an expert at making both of these beverages and used methods brought over from the "old country."

The children remember going out on cold, winter days to a straw-covered patch of ground near the sunken vegetable barrel. After whisking aside a part of the thick top layer of straw and reaching down the length of the elbow, they drew up a panful of Ben Davis or the now relatively rare Willow Twig apples. Farther down were buried the Winesaps, saved until last because they were the best "keepers." Under their mother's capable hand, these were transformed into spiced, warm applesauce, apple dumplings, or juicy pies. Of course, many of them found their way into the mouths of the children, raw and unpeeled!

None of the children wanted to miss the novelty of sauerkraut-making day. First, there was the gathering and trimming of the large cabbage heads; then the tiresome task of "cutting down" with a long kraut cutter. This instrument had a little box in which to place a half-head of cabbage. The box was pushed back and forth over a barrel and crisp shreds of cabbage formed a mound below. The children finished the operation after one of their parents added the right amount of salt. Their scrubbed feet had been covered with clean stockings. After that, it was a simple matter of jumping up and down in the barrel!

Although the meals of those days may have lacked variety, they evidently were not without good flavor. For an idea, we need only to listen to those, who as children, thrived on hot German potato salad with boiled dressing and onion; warm, buttered corn bread; and fried corn

mush or buckwheat cakes eaten with sorghum molasses or honey! There was "smearcase," that end-product of a dishpanful of thick, sour milk, warmed slowly on the back of the stove, and a white bag swinging for several hours from the clothesline or the limb of an apple tree. The aroma from a table filled with eight or ten loaves of freshly baked bread has not been erased from their memories, nor has the good taste of their mother's egg noodles, swimming in rich chicken broth.

Sugar was never used lavishly for dessert because it was too expensive. Barbara relied more heavily on sorghum and molasses for sweetening purposes. She also made good use of wild honey when the boys were fortunate enough to trail a bee to his cache in a hollow tree. With seven or eight cows, there was no need for skimping on cream and there were always plenty of eggs when those were called for in recipes.

Besides the previously mentioned apple pies, Barbara made custard and raisin pies and several kinds of fruit pies, including those made with wild blackberries and elderberries, gathered in the woods. The dried fruits, too, were used in pies, but were more often stewed and eaten with cream.

The cakes and cookies made in that kitchen must have been good to the taste. It is said that Ben ate so many of them at Fannie's wedding that he got sick! Who can remember for certain which tasted best—the ginger cookies, the soft, chewy molasses cookies or the sour cream sugar cookies? Barbara often flavored her cakes with nuts or raisins or baked them with fruit in the upside-down manner. A sugar frosting was not missed, especially when the cakes were eaten with a glass of cold cider or milk.

Perhaps no single food-preparing operation yielded such a delicious variety of year-round good eating as the annual butchering. If this came on a school day, the children stayed home to help. Although it entailed hard work for all of them who were old enough to lend a hand, the occasion was considered more or less of a lark. This usually took place late in December, however, if the meat supply was low in the fall, an extra hog or perhaps a sheep was butchered at corn-shucking time. The winter butchering included seven or eight hogs, weighing from 200 to 400 pounds, a beef or two, and sometimes a sheep.

Butchering day began at three or four o'clock in the

morning with the arrival of four or five neighbors. Among those who often came to help was Christian Ulrich, who usually appropriated the job of shooting the animals. After they were killed the hogs were brought, two at a time, from the barn on a drag-horse. The night before, Christian covered the bob-sled with scrubbed planks. The scalding barrel was placed in a slanting position at one end of the sled. Near at hand, the women heated water in two iron kettles, while someone put a bucket of wood ashes into the water for a lye effect. After a hog had been dipped in the barrel of scalding water, several people gathered around to scrape the hair off while the carcass was hot. When it was scraped clean, two men hung the animal by inserting a gambrel in its legs and hoisting it over a forked pole. When the head and entrails were removed, the animal was washed with hot and cold water and carried into the summer kitchen where it was split in half and tied up to cool until the next day. By the end of the day as many as nine or eleven animals hung there.

The next main part of the procedure took place in the summer kitchen, in the center of which was a huge, smooth, oak block sawed to the right height for cutting meat. After the hams and shoulders were cut and trimmed, they were placed in a hogs-head barrel which contained some water. Into this barrel, Christian first put an unbroken egg and then began to add salt. When the egg floated, it was the signal that enough salt had been added. In two or three weeks the hams and shoulders had soaked sufficiently in this brine and they were then hung in the smoke-house to drip dry and await the lighting of the hickory-wood fire.

While the hams were being trimmed, Barbara "fried-down" the ribs and backbone meat in the large, black pans ordinarily used for baking bread. They were cooked and then put in large crocks, covered with lard, and stored in a cool place. The meat kept for a long time when it was prepared this way. These bony pieces were combined with sauerkraut to make the main dish of many winter meals.

The trimmings from hams and shoulders and other scrap meat were ground into sausage in a huge, black grinder. Sometimes the tenderloin was added to it, but if Christian was on the alert this never happened. He insisted that such a choice piece of meat was "too good"

to be "wasted" in the sausage, whereupon it was "fried down" and usually eaten within a few days. Some of the ground beef was added to the sausage and the whole mixture was seasoned and blended together by hand in a wash tub.

The unpleasant task of scraping the intestines always fell to the women. The smaller intestines were used as casings for the sausage when it came out of the iron press. The larger ones enclosed the liverwurst, a delicious ground mixture of head meat, ears, tongue, and some of the heart and liver. The Reeser children regarded the thick slices of liverwurst and onions in their school lunch sandwiches as something extra special. Other delicacies resulting from the butchering were "swadamanga"—pig's stomach stuffed with a dressing; pickled pig's feet; and "galrich," a jellied dish made of the feet and ears of the pork.

The other major task in the "working up" of the pigs before smoking time, was that of rendering the lard. Lard usually figured as the shortening in baking or frying. Cubed squares of fat were put into the black kettle beneath which a fire was kept going at a slow, even temperature. The process of boiling was considered finished whenever the cracklings arose with "white roses" on them. With the help of another man, Christian inserted a pole under the handle of the kettle and lifted it with its hot, sputtering contents, off the fire. When the boiling mass had cooled to the right temperature, it was put through the lard press and then into large crocks. Finally, it was covered with cheesecloth and carried into the cellar.

Several advantages were gained when the Reeser family butchered their beefs and pork at the same time. The addition of some ground beef in the sausage gave them a food with more body and less greasiness. Also, they were able to make another kind of sausage which contained a larger proportion of beef than pork. This was made by seasoning the two kinds of ground meat with salt, sugar, and pepper; saltpeter was added, and the mixture stuffed tightly into cloth sacks four inches wide and two feet long. Later smoking added flavor and helped to preserve this meat.

Then, too, dried beef could be smoked with the same fire used for the pork products. This was prepared by cutting round steak into pieces lengthwise with the grain. Each day for three days, Christian rubbed the pieces

thoroughly with a mixture of salt, brown sugar, and salt-peter. Several times a day he turned each piece. These, too, were hung to drip until the final step of smoking.

And so we come to the smoke house, that relic of matchless, by-gone flavor! Christian had built his smoke house about ten by eighteen feet. A small stove was in the center on the dirt floor and there was no chimney. The hickory wood that had been piled alongside, had been only partially dried out so that it would burn very slowly. The fire was started early each morning for four or five days, and was replenished several times throughout the day. No one seemed to mind walking through the cold, winter air to add more twigs to the fire. In spite of the smoky atmosphere, it was pleasant to peer at a dozen or more hams, that many slabs of bacon, the rows of side meat hanging from wires, and the fat sausages slung over the rafters. Pleasant, and mouth-watering! When each item had been smoked to the right degree, it was taken down and stored. The hams and bacons were often wrapped in cloth sacks or heavy paper and buried in the oats bin.

Not all the meat on the kitchen table came from that prepared during the butchering season. Interspersed with these dishes were good things that resulted from the expert marksmanship of the boys. They melted down leaden bars and molded shells during long, winter evenings. Squirrels, rabbits, wood chucks, wild ducks and geese, quail, and similar small fowl were their prey. These were considered very good eating, especially when stuffed with a variety of delicious dressings. Domestic fowls, too, either fried or roasted with "fillsel," or used in soups, were frequently relied upon for variety.

And no story of the Reeser family is complete without mentioning fish. Fresh from the Mackinaw, rolled in flour or cornmeal and fried in butter, fish on the table of that family was consumed with relish. Fishing is the one sport in which Christian frequently indulged. His love of that pleasant pastime was so deeply ingrained in his being that it is not surprising to find expert fishermen in each of his children's families down to the present generation.

The waste fats from all kinds of meat were always carefully conserved. Once or twice a year, Barbara put them, together with tallow from beefs or sheep and cracklings from lard rendering, into the large, black kettle to

make a batch of soap. She made her own lye from wood ashes and water. When the ashes overflowed in the bottom of the kitchen range, one of the children scraped them out into a bucket and put them into a V-shaped hopper made for that purpose. Then several days before she planned to make soap, Barbara poured water into the hopper. A strong lye solution dripped from a spout at the bottom. It was added to the waste fats in the kettle and a roaring fire was built beneath. After long hours of boiling, the mass was cooled and cut into large squares. The clean-smelling product was placed on a shelf to dry. Although this same product is made by many rural people today for laundry purposes, it was an all-purpose soap for them, being used for hands and faces as well as for scrubbing, dishes and the laundry.

As modern machines for washing clothes make that operation easier and easier, it becomes increasingly difficult for us to understand how women of eighty years ago were able to keep a large family in clean clothes. The processes of pumping, carrying and heating water, and of bending and rubbing over tubs, are described in advertisements with one word, "drudgery." But in those days, if there were a lot of people for whom to wash, there were also many to share the hard work. Also, clothes were worn for longer periods of time than they are today. One hears stories of long woolen underwear that were donned in the fall and not taken off until the next spring. Colors were picked for their tendency to "not show the dirt." The pieces that were ironed were done so with the heavy, black, sad irons now used as book ends by antique enthusiasts. Washday was accepted as a matter of course in the week's work, but, all told, the washing and ironing of clothes is one phase of pioneer life that is not looked back on with nostalgic longing.

The job of making clothes for a family so large entailed a considerable amount of work for Barbara, but she probably looked on it as being more interesting than washing. There were two spinning wheels in the Reeser household. The large one was probably a home-made affair; its wheel had to be pushed because it had no treadle. The small one was used for spinning the finer wools. Enough was spun each year to keep the family in stockings, scarves, and sweaters. The wool was dyed after it

had been spun and formed into skeins. Wild berries made shades of dyes ranging from blue to red, yellow was obtained from certain kinds of bark. However, Barbara used walnut shells more than anything else. These made a practical, greenish-brown shade, just the right color for socks.

Every year some wool was taken to a carder to be prepared for making quilts and comforters. In the earlier days, it was necessary to go all the way to Lakin, a place beyond Peoria. When a carder set up business at Washington, shorter and more frequent trips could be made for this purpose. On the return trip, Barbara usually brought back a large amount of cotton cloth to be made into dresses, petticoats, shirts, linens, comforters, and the like. Almost as soon as they were old enough to hold a needle, she taught her daughters to sew. It was far too large a task for one woman to make all that was needed by hand. Seventeen years after their arrival in Illinois and shortly before the marriage of Annie, a major purchase was made in the form of a Howe sewing machine. Such an instrument was still so rare and relatively unproven in the area at that time that Barbara later told of the great indecision and hand-trembling that preceded the signing a check for seventy dollars. The first garments made on the new machine were the white shirt Annie's husband wore for the first time to his wedding, and Annie's own bridal dress of black China silk. The success of these first attempts was assurance of the worth of the purchase, and in the years that followed, the machine paid for itself many times.

After years of saving cotton rags, Barbara was able to lay a carpet on the downstairs bedroom floor. Lena remembers vividly the endless task of sewing enough strips for a rug to cover the entire floor. When there were finally enough, Christian took them along on a regular trading trip to Roanoke where he left them with a carpet weaver.

The feeling of something softer than wood underfoot seemed like a luxury; however, it presented a new cleaning problem to the girls and their mother. It was necessary to untack the carpet at housecleaning time and remove the several inches of dusty hay beneath. Then the floor was swept and scrubbed and laid with a fresh layer of clean-smelling hay. The hay served the dual purpose of giving a feeling of depth and plushness to the

carpet and of providing a place for the dust to settle. However, the father of the house never became fully resigned to the idea of hay underfoot. To him, it only constituted an unnecessary fire hazard.

Christian's ever-present dread of fire and his repeated warnings about taking precautions are clearly remembered by his children. They have never forgotten the day when they saw him drop his work in the field and run with unbelievable speed toward the yard where they were playing. They realized he was trying to warn them of something but his words were undiscernible. Unknown to them, he had spotted flames leaping out of the center chimney. He paused at the front gate long enough to grab the "slop" bucket and scold, "Here you sit and let the house burn up!", then dashed upstairs where he heaved the contents of the bucket against the brick chimney. By this time, the flue fire had died down of its own accord and the only result of his attempt at fire-extinguishing was an unpleasant odor that pervaded the upstairs region for several days.

To you, who have never hewn a house out of virgin timber with your bare hands; who have never spent one hour making your own furniture; whose home and all its contents are protected by fire insurance; Christian Reeser might well have said, "Do not laugh loudly."

CHAPTER IV

FATHER OF THIRTEEN

"Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round thy table."
Ps. 128 : 3.

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Thirteen "olive plants" grew about the table of Christian Reeser. When a man has been the father of that many children, it is impossible to write a complete biography of him without including some of the details of the lives of the children and the activities in which they engaged. The unfolding of each of their individual personalities determined, in part, the development of his own character.

The births of the three oldest children in Indiana and of the other ten in Illinois have already been mentioned. At current maternity rates, Father Reeser would have paid between two and three thousand dollars for the births of this thirteen. But the initial cost of children in those days was almost nothing. All told, they were an asset financially, as well as in other ways, and there was nothing unique about having a dozen or more of them. Each of the Reeser children's names (the first two with German spelling) and the dates of their birth were recorded by their mother in the family Bible. Her beautiful German script is faint, but still readable. Each entry begins thus: "On . . . (the date,) a gift from God . . . (the name.)"

A physician was looked upon by Father Reeser as an unnecessary expense, but Dr. Crawford, who ministered to people in the country surrounding Eureka, was held in high esteem by him. That good man was not called to the Reeser farm more than two or three times in the history of the family, and those were on occasions other than the events of birth. Sometimes a neighboring self-educated midwife, Magdalena Miller, was called in to assist. She was a woman who liked children but who had none of her own. The children probably liked her, too, because she had a nice habit of giving out dimes, especially to Lena who bore her name. Lena remembers having saved as many as eight of them. When she attended a birth, this woman always quoted her favorite saying: "The child doesn't make itself; it's here." In spite of the presence of Magdalena, Christian usually

took the initiative on these occasions and considered himself as adept as anybody at such simple operation, as cutting the cord.

When the twelfth and thirteenth, a pair of twin boys arrived, their mother expressed her disappointment. With only four daughters to help in the work of caring for seven sons, she had hoped for another daughter, and that turn of events made the ratio four to nine! However the twin boys, Peter and Andrew, were a novelty and both showed good promise of thriving.

Only three months later the family was unexpectedly saddened by the death of Andrew. A few minutes after he had been placed out in the sun under a mosquito netting, he was seized with an attack of convulsions and died. The father assumed the sobering task of constructing a small coffin for this first family death. He carried it to a hill south of the farm where other families had started a small cemetery. Instead of placing a stone at the head of the small mound, he planted a tiny evergreen tree. This living marker has grown to a height of over seventy feet and can be seen from a long distance.

It was only for a broken bone or for an extreme illness that Father Reeser accorded a physician his place. He called the local doctor for Peter, who as a child was near death with inflammatory rheumatism. Otherwise, he diagnosed the family's illnesses himself and administered his own prescriptions. He fought colds successfully by administering hot elderberry tea to the patient and having him go to bed to "sweat it out."

He frequently used wine and whiskey for medicinal purposes. Once, following an accident, he called for wine in preference to a doctor. This was the occasion when Gus Adams, the hired hand, lost control of the horses during a runaway. Christian seized the reins and continued hanging onto them after the horses had broken away from the buggy. Although he was being dragged along the ground, he stubbornly maintained his hold until his head struck a tree, knocking him unconscious. Gus immediately ran for help; Mrs. Reeser ran down the road in a hysterical fashion; Lena, the only other person present, turned her father over on his back and fanned his face until he regained consciousness. After he had been carried home and put to bed, he refused Nicholas Maurer's offer to call a doctor. "Nein, bring mir ein bisschen Wein," he said. In this case, he recuperated without

further treatment.

At another time, a local group of men working on the Maurer farm were interrupted by the excited approach of a neighbor. He had been bitten by a rattlesnake and was nearly wild with agitation and apprehension. "Drink a lot of whiskey, all you can hold," was the prescription Christian gave. The victim followed these directions and suffered no worse effect than a bad hangover.

Christian recommended other natural remedies and the reported results were sometimes astonishing. Each spring he administered huge doses of sulphur and molasses to the children to "purify the blood." Early use of rhubarb effected the same results. To his credit it must be said that neither he nor his family were sick to any great extent. After they were no longer under his care, his advice to his children concerning the maintenance of their health, was: "Work hard, get enough rest, be careful not to eat too much, and keep the bowels open."

The following letter, written by Father Reeser and found among his personal effects, shows his concern for one of his married children.

"Dear Friend:

I have read in the Weltblatt ("World-Paper") about your medicine for sickness of the stomach, constipation and dyspepsy. I have a son suffering more than a year already. He has doctored a lot. He is 44 years old. So have read your article, my fellowman. There I thought to write to you and to ask you whether you are kind enough to send me an answer.

Christian Reeser"

The identity of the "friend" is not known. The letter evidently was not mailed, and if the son was cured, the remedy must have come from some other source. Their father's concern for his children's physical well-being as revealed in the above letter, is well remembered by his surviving children. Of the twelve who lived past infancy, only one, Joseph, died in middle age at the age of thirty-eight. Ten of Christian's thirteen children passed the life expectancy rate, some by as many as twenty years. Part of the credit for this unusual record must be accorded to the good care their father gave them.

In the field of formal education, Father Reeser did not show the same degree of concern. The three oldest children received a very meager amount of schooling; however, there were several reasons why this was true. In the earlier days on the Mackinaw the nearest school was Sodom, at least four miles away. This distance was not considered too far for even the small children to walk in the fall and spring weather, but those were the seasons when the children could not easily be spared from the farm work. Although there was much less work to do in the dead of winter, the deep snow and ice prevented regular attendance. Unfortunately, this lack of schooling did not disturb their father to any great extent. He had not found his own limited education to be a hindrance in making a living. One would suppose that their mother who had received more than the usual amount of education for her day would have supplemented their meager academic learning at home. But her neglect in this respect can probably be attributed to the great amount of work involved in meeting only the physical needs of her children.

The arrival of more families soon brought forth a desire for a school in the immediate neighborhood. Three directors, Nick Maurer, George Reel, and Charles Builta, were chosen to comprise a board to investigate the matters of a building and a location. A granary in the Congerville area was appraised and approved for a building. It was fitted with runners and dragged through the brush by eight horses to a place that came to be known as Hickory Point. On a hillside about two miles from the Reeser farm and one-fourth mile from the nearest road it was set up in a hickory-studded area. It was not long until there were about twenty pupils attending the little school whose dimensions were only 18 by 20 feet. They came on sleds and snow shoes in the winter and their paths often crossed wolf tracks.

In spite of the lapse of many years, Lena, Ben, Dave, and Pete can remember many details of school life at Hickory Point. There were rough wooden benches to sit on and a small, black, wood-burning heater in the center of the room for warmth. Each morning, the teacher called the roll from behind a table that kept his books, an inkstand, and a supply of hickory rods. The two blackboards hanging against the front wall were mainly for the use of the teacher; each pupil did his own work on a small

slate which he held on his lap.

At first only women teachers were employed. They usually boarded at Maurers or at Sam Daniels, a family who also kept the Sodom teacher. Out of her \$20.00 per month salary the teacher paid from \$2.50 to \$3.00 per week for board and room. Some people felt this salary was already too high; consequently, they protested when it was later raised \$5.00 per month.

It was the duty of the "school marm" to teach "children" from the ages of five to eighteen and sometimes twenty years. Such an age range made it difficult for any teacher but especially so for one who was young and inexperienced. She was expected to keep good order and discipline in a crowded building that was usually too cold. The schoolhouse had been set on four wooden blocks and the icy wind in the winter whipped under the floor through all the spaces between the corners. Nor was it an easy matter to regulate the drinking from the pail which rested on a bench near the door, a tin dipper swimming in it. The children knew that as soon as the bucket was empty, two of them would be sent to refill it at the spring about a half mile away. Each one's turn to go on this errand came more often if he drank lots of water.

One particular Monday in those bygone days has not been forgotten. Someone discovered that five or six skunks had moved under the building over the weekend. The odor rising up through the loosely-nailed floor compelled the teacher to announce that everyone could go outside until the animals were driven out and killed. The boys managed to make this operation last all day, preferring the odor to the loathesome task of studying. By late afternoon the animals had finally been killed with the aid of long, pointed sticks cut from the surrounding hickory trees. The teacher realized it would be necessary to end classes for several days, and so, for awhile the building stood deserted with door and windows opened wide.

After a number of years a man teacher was hired in an attempt to improve the discipline. John Shaw is remembered as a teacher who was proficient in persuading children to do well, saving himself the problem of punishing often. Sometimes if punishment was necessary, the offender was asked to sit with one of the opposite sex. For the boys, this was considered one of the worst things to be borne.

One day, Master Shaw's one o'clock bell went unan-

swered. At two o'clock, all the scholars came marching up the hill in a contrite fashion. Two boys had been appointed as spokesmen to offer the excuse for their tardiness. It seemed that Andrew Moore, the boy who could run so fast that he could catch squirrels, had made the game of fox-and-geese so interesting that no one had heard the bell! When they offered to make up double time at noons and recesses, what could an understanding teacher do but reprove and then forgive? Shaw became so well liked that they say the last day he taught seemed more like a funeral than the usual last-day-of-school.

The directors gradually effected improvements in the little building with its meager furnishings. At first they added to this building and later erected a new, larger one. The former granary was moved a second time and today is used as a laundry room on the Charles Built place. The first hand-made benches were later replaced with desks, but those were either too large or too small for some of the pupils because they were all of one size.

Besides those subjects commonly spoken of as the three R's, the children studied spelling and geography. History could be studied the last year by those who chose to pursue that subject. Lena liked her books so well that she has saved some of the texts, including the famous, and now relatively rare, McGuffey's Reader.

Although the school term opened soon after corn-shucking time, it seldom lasted over six months and many of the children attended regularly only from December through March. By the time fence-building days arrived, the majority of McGuffey's Readers had been stored away for the next year. Those who were not particularly fond of studying were glad for the arrival of spring even though it meant the beginning of months of hard work. Plowing, planting, and haying following fence-making. The preceding chapter has perhaps given some idea of the endless number of things that required the help of the children. Nothing short of sickness allowed any of them to get by without putting in a full day of work.

After 1867, the year when Father Reeser was called to be a preacher, the children were often left in responsible positions while he was away on duty. Considering their father's dread of property being destroyed by fire, it was no light matter to be left in charge of the entire

farm. Much of the farm work required the use of horses, and the danger of a runaway was another fear. Their apprehension in this respect was justified one day when Pete and his mother had just turned into the lane with the horses and spring wagon. Both of them were thrown clear of the wagon and suffered injuries. This was one occasion which called for Dr. Crawford who soon found that the painful swelling in Mother Reeser's shoulder was due to a broken collar bone. It was something to be thankful for if one came out of a runaway alive or not injured permanently.

An incident that occurred when Lena was ten or twelve years old is an example of one of the many things that happened to excite a girl of that age. Her mother had gone to the neighbor's house, leaving her at home alone to bake a cake. When the cake was nearly done, she glanced outside the window and saw a tramp making his way up the lane. This was a cause for great fright to a girl her age, alone at home. However, she was still mindful of her cake and opened the oven door so it would finish baking without burning. Then she locked the front door and after escaping out the back way, ran all the way to the neighbor's house. Her mother was greatly alarmed when she realized that the house had been left to the mercy of a tramp, and the child's fears doubled. There was no sign of the vagabond when the excited pair arrived home but the mother looked relieved only after she had reached under the mattress and assured herself that their cash savings of several hundred dollars had not been discovered.

The heavy responsibilities and long hours of hard work left little time for recreation for the Reeser children. Furthermore, little money could be spared to buy playthings. And yet, there were many things which kept their childhood from being drab and dull. Some of the tasks around the farm were novel and interesting enough to be considered as play. It was fun to knock off the frozen cornstalks on cold, late fall mornings, rake them into piles, and make a party out of burning them. Gathering wild honey, blackberries, and nuts, as well as hunting and fishing, were valuable recreation as well as supplementing the family table.

The school experience served as a form of recreation for those who liked it. And for those who did not, the little building at Hickory Point still had something to

offer in the sense that it soon became a social center for community activities. A literary society was formed and met once a month. There were stirring debates and spelling matches with young people from the Sodom district. When a party called for music, Ben, with Alber and Eli Phillip, supplied it with their violins.

These neighborhood gatherings were often swelled by the presence of young married people. On one occasion the room was so crowded that a joist in the floor broke near the stove. The floor caved in under the teacher, a woman who weighed nearly 300 pounds. While several persons grabbed chunks of wood to hold back the red-hot heater now standing on three legs, others lunged after the hefty "school marm." This was probably one of the occasions which revealed the need for a larger building.

Some of the Reeser children attended a singing class that was held in the school house one night a week. Simon Hartzler, a man from Missouri who had purchased a general store in Carlock, stimulated interest in, and conducted this school. The words to one song are still remembered by those who attended: "Singe schoen, singe schoen, Ach, wie singen wir so schoen."

Those who were old enough went to a Sunday School begun in the 1870's by a Methodist layman, Jacob Hubbard. This class, too, was held in the schoolhouse and lasted about an hour in the afternoon. First, the children followed while the teacher read aloud from a little red-backed German New Testament. Each of them had purchased their own copy for ten cents. Then everyone in turn was called upon to read a portion. The teacher explained the meaning of the section read, and the class ended after some of the verses had been memorized. The good man's efforts were partly discouraged by one young man in the neighborhood who was adverse to the idea of such a school, and who purchased a croquet set to lure the boys away from it.

Unusually good behavior could be observed on the part of the younger Reesers for several weeks preceding the holiday season. This was in anticipation of Pelzenickel, that good old man in German folklore who brings presents for good children on Christmas Eve. He never failed to appear at the Reeser farmhouse door, rapping loudly.

He wore large, loosely fitting clothes and rang a bell which was very much like one worn by one of the cows. On his back was a sack which the children knew contained hard candies. At the suggestion of their father, they all knelt and thanked God for the good things of life. Only after that expression were they allowed to accept the sweets from Pelzenickel's bag.

Although they always laid fresh hay on the henhouse floor for the reindeer of the benevolent old man, the children were never able to catch a glimpse of them. But they went happily upstairs to bed after the exit of Pelzenickel, whose part was played by a neighbor. While they lay in their beds contemplating the morrow, their father was downstairs hanging a cedar branch from the center of the kitchen ceiling. Although the children would have preferred to cut down an entire tree from the many that were on the farm, he would never consent to using a whole tree for that occasion. Thus it was on a large branch that their mother arranged cookies, candy, and popcorn.

In the morning the children awaited their father's call which came from the bottom of the stairs. "Hey, Christmas gifts," he always called out in German, and this was the signal to descend. The branch was soon stripped of good things which were divided among the children. When they gathered around the breakfast table, each one found a small gift or two hidden beneath the cloth at his place.

Only the older children were allowed to participate in the New Year's Eve shooting and serenade. This celebration called for musical instruments, guns, and any noisemaking instrument that could be found. Neighborhood families were first treated to noise and then to music. Then they opened their doors to the performers and passed out apples, nuts, and cider.

Happily, the farm work was the lightest at the time of year when skating was best. The lack of steel skates kept no one from indulging in that sport. They learned to fashion their own from wood. Ben, who had a pair with steel blades, was one of the fastest skaters in that area. The frozen Mackinaw called forth large groups of grownups as well as children, and many were the games played on its glassy surface. A tragedy occurred one season when the boys' friend, George Builta, died of double pneumonia, contracted from lying on the ice after

perspiring.

When Ben, Dave, and Pete were in their early teens they enjoyed the experience of going to a fair in Peoria with their father. Here, for the first time they rode on a horse-drawn streetcar which was pulled on tracks. For ten cents they saw a side-show featuring curiosities like a six-legged calf. In all, the experiences of that day were an unusual treat for the country lads. They were happy to hear their father accept the invitation of a friend to stay with him overnight and enjoy another day of it.

Peter became proficient and well-known for his ability to run fast. He says he got his practice while chasing cows with the dog. He did so well at community races that people began to bet on his chances for winning. Because he was not tall for his age, his ability was a surprise to those who had never seen him run before. Thus those who gambled on him invariably won; however, for that reason his father began to disapprove of his participation in races. But the boy ran for the love of the race, and because he did not gamble on himself, he felt he was doing no wrong. Christian must not have been too greatly displeased with his son, because he walked down to a park north of their home in Eureka, to watch a race one day. Knowing Pete was to participate, he planted himself near the finishing line. The second runner came in twenty feet behind Pete, and remarked, in the presence of Father Reeser, that he probably would have won if he hadn't had such a poor start. Whereupon the father answered, "My boy, you've never seen the day, nor never will, when you can beat my son!"

Among the diversions that came into the lives of the Reeser children, was the arrival of visitors to the farm. Because the house was situated on a sloping hill, it commanded a good view of the lane all the way down to the main road. The figure of someone wending his way up the lane on foot or coming in a horse-drawn vehicle was easily viewed from the windows. Such an approach was always a prospect of something interesting that might happen. For the children, the arrival of Uncle John produced a mouth-watering sensation, because he usually brought forth candy from the deep recesses of his pockets. Seven of Uncle John's children had been given the same names as their cousins. There was Joe, Fannie,

Christ, Lizzie, Annie, John, Ben, and Lena. If any of the cousins came along, it was almost certain that the children would get out of work for the duration of the visit.

Sometimes they recognized at a distance one of the tramps who had been there before. The tramps who knew they would sleep on a bed instead of the hay and would be fed without having to chop wood, never failed to pass the Reeser place. Again, it was an unfamiliar vagabond. If so, that meant the interesting prospect of gathering around the fire in the evening to listen to their father converse with the traveler.

One visitor who perhaps was welcomed more by the children of the neighborhood than by their parents was Jackson, a half-breed Indian. He roamed the country, sleeping in barns, eating in homes when he was welcomed, and helping himself after dark where he was not received. He charmed the children by making them believe he was a full-blooded Indian, and indeed, he looked like one, his buckskin outfit complete with feathered headgear. He figured as the main character in most of the stories that he told and acquainted listeners with the number of scalps he had taken in his day. He never failed to mention that he had been a general in the Black Hawk War. In spite of his effect upon his juvenile listeners, Indian Jackson's stories were never fully believed by the grown-ups, and although the children liked him, they were also afraid of him. Once when Lena was visiting neighbors, she overheard someone say that Indian Jackson was in the neighborhood. She ran all the way home through the woods, seeing a copper-colored figure behind every tree. In spite of his reputation, this man was always welcomed by Father Reeser and made to feel at home on his farm.

Two evenings a month were enlivened by the arrival of another person, Levi, whose visits have been described by Dave as follows:

"When I was a little shaver, we would all stand around and listen whenever any agent came around, like book agents and peddlers. There was a peddler from Peoria who came around every two weeks by the name of Levi Livingstone. That was before the little towns around here were started. After they sprang up, his business fell through. He had a pair of big bay horses and a big covered wagon with chicken coops made right in the wagon. He'd buy ducks and chickens and geese and turkeys and eggs from people and put them in the coops,

all but the eggs. In the middle of the wagon he kept his dry goods like calico, pants, shirts, and underwear, caps and hats. He had a box that he sat on where he kept his groceries—it had a lid on and he had a blanket over it—sugar, coffee, beans, rice, raisins, mixed candy and stick candy. And he had herring in wooden kegs from Holland, and once in a while Pa would buy a keg of them fish, and if you wanted a jug of whiskey, you'd order a jug and he'd bring it to you the next time. And at Christmas he had 'prize boxes.' They was made out of paste board and had izenglass. You could look in and see the candy but you couldn't see the prize. It cost a penny and had things in it like a stick-pin or a ring.

He'd come along on Wednesday afternoons and unhitch his horses and put them in the barn and feed them. After supper he'd say, 'Have you got any chickens to sell?' We didn't sell some every time, but when we did he'd go out with us boys and catch them on the roost, picking out the biggest ones. He'd pay fifty cents for a goose, twenty-five for a duck, and twenty-five for a chicken. He didn't weigh them. He had four children and sometimes he brought one of them along for us to play with till the next time he came around."

It was from Levi that Mother Reeser bought her 'good' silverware, a set of silver-plated cutlery in a beautiful, old-fashioned pattern which is still in the family.

One agent who was not as successful in selling his wares as Levi, was the man who appeared one day with a little organ for sale. The children who were the most musically minded waited with held breaths and did all the pleading and persuading that they felt they dared but this type of merchandise received a cold eye from their father. At the salesman's suggestion, he finally consented to allow the instrument to stay on the place for a trial period. During the following days he heard beautiful hymns played by Ben who could bring forth music from any instrument by ear, with a little practice. But in the end the organ had to go. To one who loved music as well as Christian did, the decision must have caused some inward struggle. But as a minister he felt morally obligated to uphold all the practices of his denomination, which at that time discouraged the use of musical instruments in the homes.

One day in the 1880's a hired livery rig came up the

land and stopped in the yard where Father Reeser was working. The man who stepped out and opened a conversation was compelled to talk a considerable length of time before he secured the information he wanted. A portrait and biographical album of Woodford County citizens was being compiled, and the gentleman assured Mr. Reeser that the book would not be complete without his inclusion. The children who gathered around as close as possible soon realized that their father was not favorably impressed with the idea of the smooth-tongued stranger. The preface of this book, which has been published since, gives us an idea of the nature of the man's words, to which the humble farmer listened with unusual indifference:

"In this volume will be found a record of many whose lives are worthy the imitation of coming generations. It tells how some, commencing life in poverty, by industry and economy, have accumulated wealth. It tells how others, with limited advantages for securing an education, have become learned men and women, with an influence extending throughout the length and breadth of the land . . . It tells also of many, very many, who, not seeking the applause of the world, have pursued 'the even tenor of their way,' content to have it said of them as Christ said of the woman performing a deed of mercy—'they have done what they could'."

It was because Christian wished to be classed among the last-mentioned—those who did not seek the applause of the world—that he felt no necessity of being included in a book such as the man described. He answered some of the questions put to him with great reluctance; to others he was silent, and the inquirer received some of the answers he wanted from the children. He finally induced Mr. Reeser to put an "x" on the dotted line. Having gained his objective thus far, the gentleman got ready to take a picture to go with the story, but was not long in becoming aware that he was treading on dangerous ground, and he soon made a rather hasty retreat out the lane.

As time passed, the incident was all but forgotten, until one day another man came to the house bringing a heavy volume nearly a half-foot thick. The title of the massive volume was as imposing as its size. It had been named A Portrait and Biographical Album of Woodford County, Illinois, Containing Full Page Portraits and Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative



Christian Reeser at the age of 100 years. He still went swimming when he neared the century mark.



Joseph, Third Child of Christian Reeser. Died at age of thirty-eight. Of the twelve who lived past infancy, Joseph was the only one who did not pass the life expectancy rate.



Jacob Reeser; when he was past seventy years old, he shot a deer, tanned the hide and made this jacket. This work was all done by himself.



Christian's first piece of carpentry in the New World. This cabin still stands, over a century old, near Parker, Indiana.



Christian Reeser on his 100th Birthday; his eldest son, John, who at first was called Johannes; his grandson, Elmer; and his great-granddaughter, Stella Shertz.

Those That Remain: William Plaag, Peter Reeser, Lena Plaag, Ben Reeser, Mrs. Sam Reeser, Dave Reeser.



David, Benjamin, Magdalena, Samuel, Barbara, Christian and Annie.

The Four Daughters of Christian Reeser. Back row: Fannie Ulrich; Second row: Lena Plaag, Barbara Ummel; Front row: Anna Ulrich.



Citizens of the Country, Together with Portraits and Biographies of all the Governors of the State, and of the Presidents of the United States. Those who knew Christian Reeser as a man who lived and preached humility as it becomes followers of Jesus Christ, can imagine how he reproached himself for having consented to the inclusion of his biography under such an imposing title. In spite of the publishers' statement in the preface that "we flatter ourselves that we give to our reader a work with few errors of consequence." Mr. Reeser was disappointed to find at least a half-dozen mistakes in his biography alone, one of which disturbed him considerably. Perhaps these mistakes were due to his own lack of ready response when he was being questioned as well as to the carelessness of the inquirer. At any rate, those statements which, on the basis of information obtained from more reliable sources, we have concluded to be incorrect, are pointed out in parentheses in the following excerpt from the book:

"Rev. Christian Reeser resides on a fine farm of 230 acres on section 3, Montgomery Township, where he is engaged in the occupation of general farming and stock-raising and which has been his home since 1857. Since locating on this place he has worked diligently, practicing a wise economy, and being possessed of shrewd good sense, has made money rapidly and brought his farm under fine cultivation. The location of his farm was an excellent one for the purpose of stock-raising, being situated on both sides of the Mackinaw. He also owns another farm of 160 acres, well located, in Arkansas.

"Mr. Reeser is a native of Lorraine, Germany, but which at the time of his birth was a portion of France. He was born in September, 1819, being a son of French and German parents. The father of Mr. Reeser was John, a Frenchman, a native of Lorraine, where he followed agricultural pursuits. While a soldier in France he met, and afterward married a German lady who was born and reared in Germany. John Reeser was a brave French soldier, who had left plow to shoulder the musket, gallantly helping to sustain the reputation of his country for brilliant service in battle. He died while comparatively a young man at his home in Lorraine, being 35 years of age. (The elder Reeser, like others of his faith, had accepted noncombatant service which Napoleon allowed for those whose consciences would not allow them to kill an enemy. This misstatement was grievous

to Christian who was well aware of his father's conviction on the matter.) His widow subsequently came to the United States and established herself in Indiana, at which place she was laid to rest at the age of 60 years. She and her husband both died in full hope of glorious immortality, having been members during life of the old Mennonite church. (Christian's hope in the immortality of his parents rested on the fact of their spiritual salvation, and not in their denominational affiliation.)

"Our subject was reared in France. His education was conducted in the French language, but as is usual in those border provinces, he also learned to speak German. He was about twenty years old and single when he came to America with his mother in 1839 (it is certain that Mrs. Reeser did not come with the rest of the family; the above paragraph is contrary to this statement), his marriage taking place some years after in 1852 in Delaware County, Indiana, where he took Miss Barbara Zimmerman for a life partner. Mrs. Reeser was born in Baden, Germany, in 1830, and came to the United States with her parents who located on a farm in Delaware County, Ind., where they resided until released from earth's trials at a good old age. They were good industrious, intelligent and religious people, being worthy members of the old school Mennonite church. (Barbara Reeser's parents never saw the United States, and were probably 'released from earth's trials' somewhere near their home in Baden, Germany). Mrs. Reeser was a fine, pleasant young woman when she came with her parents to America, and was not long in this country before she met her fate in the person of the young farmer, who afterward became her husband.

"Mr. Reeser came to Montgomery Township from Delaware County, Ind., where he had resided on a farm of his own for about 10 years. Previous to his residence in Indiana, at which place his mother died, he lived in Butler County, Ohio, for eight years, that being the place in which he located when first coming to the United States.

"Mr. and Mrs. Reeser had a family of thirteen children, one of whom, Andrew, died when an infant of three months. Those now living are John, the oldest of the family, who married Phoebe Miller and makes his home in the village of Danvers, McLean County, this State, where he follows the occupation of a machine agent; Anna, wife of David Ulrich, resides on a farm in Roanoke Town-

ship; Fanny, wife of Samuel Ulrich resides on a farm in McLean County near Bloomington; Jacob A. makes his home in Arkansas, and follows the profession of an engineer; Samuel and Lena E. are the best educated of the family so far; (At this point Samuel's name has been scratched out and the name "Jacob" substituted in ink. Since the handwriting has not been identified there is no way of knowing who disagreed.) Benjamin E., David and Peter are at home. Lena E. is the youngest of the girls and Peter the youngest of the family. All the children have received a good practical education, and have been encouraged in acquiring good habits, and are now self-supporting. They are bright, intelligent, shrewd in making a bargain, but kind to those in distress, hospitable to strangers, good home keepers, everyone of the family being members of the Omish (Amish Mennonite) Church. Mr. Reeser being a minister therein for over 30 years. He takes very little part in politics, but has held some local offices and endeavors to vote at each election according as his conscience and intelligence prompt him.

"The great number of years, which have elapsed since Mr. Reeser's first connection with the honest brethren of the Omish Church, together with his excellent character and well-known integrity in all business matters, have contributed to make him not only a valued citizen but a highly respected member of the Omish community, and he has held the position of minister among them for some years."

Although he himself would not have agreed, those who knew the subject of the sketch do not feel that the description of his character was exaggerated. At any rate, Christian was informed that the signature he had given to the first man included a promise to buy a copy of the book. The price was \$25. for those whose portrait was included and \$15. for those whose picture did not appear. Mr. Reeser paid his \$15. for the enormous volume which now lies on a shelf of Dave Reeser's bedroom closet.

Father Reeser helped each of his children to get started in independent married life as much as he could. This was quite a task, considering the size of his family. With those who lived close, it was possible to share his own equipment. The January 9, 1896, issue of the Woodford

4. Chapman Bros., 1889 (copyrighted 1885); Chicago. PP 509, 510 quoted.

County Journal in a notice of public sale, gives a list of some of the things Joseph had acquired previous to his death only seven years after he had married. Included are: "1 Big Injun sulky plow; 1 top buggy; good bob-sled; 1 dinner bell; iron kettle; fruit jars; crocks; 3 stands of bees, and other items too numerous to mention."

At one time, Christian took \$350. cash from the chest after he had sold some steers, and went to Arkansas to buy land which was being sold at a low price. He would have liked to move on the 160 acres that he purchased near Stuttgart, but his wife persuaded him to stay on the Mackinaw. Later, Jacob and Ben homesteaded this property.

Most of the children followed farming. Among all the descendants of Christian Reeser, this occupation is found more than any other; next is carpentering and associated trades, such as painting.

As the children grew older and had their own families, the realization grew that they owed much to their father in the way of a spiritual heritage. They remembered him as a stern disciplinarian, one who believed in the kind of corporal punishment advocated in the Proverbs. Any resentment of harshness in this respect was balanced by the understanding that his admonitions were meant for their good, and also by the knowledge that, as an example to his flock, a minister was expected to "rule his own household well." All of them, while recognizing his weaker, human qualities, held their father in high esteem, and derived many hours of pleasure from talking with him and caring for him in his later years. He had the unique experience of seeing five of them—Annie, Fannie, John, Christian, and Barbara—celebrate their golden wedding anniversaries.

CHAPTER V

PREACHER ON FOOT

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace." Isa. 52 : 7

In 1867, ten years after he came to Illinois, Christian Reeser was ordained to be a preacher. With a farm in need of improvement and a growing family to provide for it was a serious matter to accept such a responsibility especially in a day when most of the ministers received no salary. However, he took that call of the church so seriously that, from the beginning he made it the chief business of his life.

Although his active years of ministry carried him to points outside the local area, his main place of service was in the Roanoke congregation. This was one of two congregations which had grown out of what was originally called the "Mackinaw Meeting," a group of Amish who had settled along the Mackinaw River. At first the few families met for worship in each other's homes in the same manner as the Amish do today. That practice became inconvenient with the continual influx of new settlers and the increase in the size of families already there. In 1872, those who lived toward the south purchased a building formerly used by the Rock Creek congregation; in 1875; a new building was erected by those who lived farther north. This became known as the Roanoke church.

That is the reason why Christian Reeser was ordained in a private house and why his first seven or eight years of preaching was done in homes. His ordination was decided upon by a vote of the congregation and took place at the same time as that of a co-minister, Joseph Wagner. Jacob Zehr, the cooperating bishop of the two congregations, officiated at this service. Weber, in his aforementioned history concerning the Mennonites of Illinois, says the ordination occurred at the Christian Schrock place, a short distance east of where the church now stands. However, the living members of the family say that the service took place in the Christian Zehr residence, a brick dwelling house on the Mackinaw River, where he also preached his first sermon.

There were a number of reasons why the members of the "Mackinaw Meeting" felt led to cast their vote for

him as a minister. Most important, his life showed the fruits of a genuine spiritual conversion. No one seems to remember hearing him say at what age or place he experienced a personal salvation, but he used to speak of the joy he felt, realizing victory over habits, which before he had been unable to conquer by his own will power.

His keen interest and delight in conversing with people fitted him for his mission, as well as his unassuming and humble manner. He also possessed a selfless quality of expecting more of himself than he did of others which endeared him to people. Perpetual optimism, a keen sense of humor, and a sympathizing nature were among his personal attributes which promised to qualify him for pastoral work.

His interest in politics was unusual for a Mennonite minister of his time. He shared the generally-accepted principle of the separation of church and state, but unlike some of his contemporaries who closed their ears to news of world governments, he kept up a keen interest in international affairs. He subscribed to the Veltboat (World-News), a weekly newspaper published in the German language in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Once a week he walked through the fields or rode to Slabtown to look for its arrival. When he reached the store, his first question was, "Ist die Zeitung hier?" If the answer was "Nein," he was disappointed. In the evenings, John read the news to him and the two discussed world events and problems. The younger children who listened, learned something of the unusual knowledge of geography and history he possessed for one who had not gained it through formal schooling.

His first-hand observation of the undesirable effects of war upon nations made him alert to any news that foreboded strife, especially in those nations surrounding his native land. He also closely followed the progress of the new nation where he now lived.

One day after crossing a river near Bowling Green, he met a tall, lanky man whose feet were hanging low on his horse. Like all strangers who met in those days, the two passers-by exchanged a few words. Christian would have liked to converse at length, but the man remarked that it was necessary for him to reach Metamora by a certain time. Each man started on his way, then both travelers, turning their horses simultaneously, asked what both had forgotten—the other's name. Christian

gave his. "And yours?" he called. "Abraham Lincoln," was the reply.

That name was to mean more to him as time went on. But from that simple meeting Christian developed a keen interest in the man who later became a president of the United States. He went to Metamora several times to listen to Lincoln's speeches and debates, and was impressed with the simplicity and seriousness of his words. He closely followed Lincoln's political career and, being convinced that he could keep the nation from the threatening war, voted for him in the presidential election. When later asked why he, a Democrat, had voted for Lincoln, he replied, "I liked his platform, and if that is good, it doesn't make me any difference to which party he belongs."

With all his interest in politics, however, he realized the limitations of human governments and leaders, and maintained the conviction that Christians, as the salt of the earth, could serve God and their country best by living a peaceable and godly life. This belief, formed early in life, became the basis of many of his sermons after he was called to preach.

His first sermon was preached soon after his ordination. That occasion seems to have been more trying for his wife than it was for him. He was then forty-eight years old and his lack of a formal education and inexperience in public speaking caused her to doubt his ability. When the moment came for him to stand before the group and preach the Word of God for the first time, the poor woman felt her courage give way. She took advantage of the fact that Baby Sam began to whimper and left her place to walk out into the yard. There she reflected upon the faith and courage of her husband, and after praying for strength to share the responsibilities of the days ahead, she went in again. Perhaps a reassuring smile was now on her face.

Those who have heard Christian Reeser preach, have remembered the warmth of his usual opening words, "Meine geliebten Freunde!" (My beloved friends). Bishop C. F. Derstine says of his sermons: "His style was exhortational. Usually he quoted the Bible considerably, which was quite helpful, indeed. His wholehearted and sincere handling of the Word made him quite effective. He had a vigorous style of presentation. He was whole-souled."

Oftentimes during a service, he led forth in one of

his favorite songs. Among those were: "There is a Fountain," "Brightly Beams Our Father's Mercy," and "On Jordan's Stormy Banks." When he preached at funerals he usually sang "The Haven of Rest." On one occasion he took Lena and Ben, aged about twelve and ten, to the funeral of a child and asked them to sing "Nearer My God to Thee."

It would be interesting to know the number of times he was called upon to preach at a funeral, but the idea of keeping such a record was not in accord with his conception of service. By far, the largest number of his walks across the fields were for the purpose of comforting a bereaved family and preaching at a service for their dead.

Several people who remember his preaching have described it in these words, "He preached straight from the heart." His deep voice carried well and he preached in an overflowing manner and without hesitation. It became apparent that the Spirit of God gave him the words to speak as he stood before the people.

However, it is not to be supposed that he preached without forethought or study. Although he did not rely on written notes for reminders while he was in the pulpit, he spent many hours each week either reading the Scriptures himself, or having them read until many verses became engraved in his memory. He was of the firm conviction that Biblical truths could be translated into practical daily use. He also felt the need for improving his method of relating those principles so that they would be understood clearly. That is why he could often be heard by his family, practicing aloud as he pulled weeds in the cornfield or did some other work out in the open fields.

There are people who, knowing that his wife did a considerably amount of reading to him, have come to the conclusion that he was unable to read for himself. This was true in the beginning, but after the ordination, Barbara taught him to read. The practice called for considerable effort from him because he started when he was no longer young, and it was always easier for him to concentrate on the message of the words when someone else did the reading. Before starting out for church, he usually requested a re-reading of the chapter he had chosen so that it would be fresh in his mind.

The following words from Debolt Householder, now

past 90, give an insight, not only into his preaching, but also into other work connected with a life of a minister in those days.

"What he preached was from the Bible. His policy in preaching was 'Preach what the people can understand and loud enough so they can hear you.' He didn't have much education, but he was filled with the Holy Spirit. He often walked eight miles on Saturday evenings and stayed overnight with someone who lived near the church so he would be there on time Sunday morning. He often preached in the homes, too. He had a lot of 'git' about him and he never quarreled with people. When he went anywhere, he paid out of his own pocket. He helped my brother, Fred, get a wife."

This last-mentioned courtesy was a common part of a preacher's ministry. The custom called for little courting, and once a man had fully made up his mind about whom he wanted to marry, his next step was to make the decision known to one of the ministers. Preacher Reeser was frequently asked to use his power of persuasion in such a cause. Early one day while butchering, he was interrupted by a youth who pressed him to go and ask for the hand of a girl who lived some distance away. Christian felt he could not be spared from the work that day but he finally gave his reluctant consent after the young man had begged to take the minister's place in the day's work. Christian wasted no time traveling to the girl's house, hoping to get her answer and to be home again by evening.

The girl was an interested listener but in spite of Christian's warm and convincing words, she made it very clear that she could not give an answer to a matter of so great importance on such short notice. She stated that she would like to have one day's time to decide. So the minister found himself sympathizing with the girl who had to make a decision of such importance. He made up his mind to forget the butchering and stayed there for the night.

He was surprised the next morning to hear her give her consent without any apparent indecision. He hurried home to give the glad news to the man who had all but given up hope the night before, when Christian did not return. He arrived in time to help finish the butchering job. The accommodating minister later learned that the girl had told her friends she knew all the time she would

say "yes" but felt that "a man should be kept waiting at least one day!"

There were some difficult and strained periods in the long years of Christian Reeser's ministry. This can be understood when it is remembered that those were years of rapid growth and change in the whole nation, and consequently, in the church in which he served. He was considered by some of his contemporaries to be liberal on many points, yet like many of the older ministers he perceived harm in some of the new ways of living brought about by commercial and industrial changes. Likewise he grew suspicious of innovations in the church, which, up to that time, had followed a relatively unchanging pattern of life and worship.

The records of the Roanoke congregation show that an unsuccessful attempt was made to start a Sunday school about the year 1882. A second attempt, made in 1883, also met with failure because some of the older ministers and members thought the younger generation was introducing something new which would prove harmful. To draw a fair picture of his life and ministry, it must be said of Preacher Reeser that he was one of those who discouraged these attempts in the beginning. He did not readily submit to the idea of missionary societies, revival meetings and young people's Bible meetings, when they were first introduced in the churches.

After he had passed middle age, he started to chew tobacco and he never agreed with the ministers who tried to point out that such a habit was morally wrong and a bad example to the younger people. He began to use tobacco, he said, because Dr. Crawford told him it would cure the trouble he started to have with his eyes. In defense of having acquired the habit, he pointed out the fact that he was able once again to read his Bible without difficulty.

With these few exceptions, Christian agreed with his co-workers. When he disagreed, he did so in a humble manner and never pressed his own personal opinions to a point where disharmony was created or fellowship broken. He was known for upholding the voice of the conference in warning against the sin of "kleider-pracht" (fancy clothes).

His local conference also decided that the Mennonites, as nonresistant people, should not deliver up a thief to civil authorities for punishment. Christian had an opportunity to put this decision into practice very shortly. A

certain young man who felt the urge to get some easy cash and who knew where the money was kept in the Reeser household, set some brush afire at a safe distance from the house. When he thought that all the family had left to fight the fire, he started to climb in the house through a back window, but was caught by one of the boys who let the window down, keeping him there in a half-in-half-out position. In spite of his cries and pleas he was held fast until the fire was extinguished and the preacher appeared on the scene. He was set free only after he listened to a sermon in which he was duly warned against the sins of deceiving and stealing.

Another incident that involved a neighbor, shows that in his daily life, Christian practiced what he preached in church. This man, whose first name was Adam, had a reputation of being proud, and he often would scoff at Mr. Reeser for his godly life and kindly warnings about the end to which his sins would bring him. He bitterly resented the minister for rebuking him when he gave his frail, meek wife a black eye for no apparent cause.

Adam knew the position his neighbor took regarding the taking of life in warfare and he used every opportunity he could to deride him for that belief. He took an obvious delight in wearing his Civil War coat whenever he appeared before Mr. Reeser. With its large brass buttons, the heavy, woolen, cape-like garment made a fine showing.

One day in April, Adam crossed the Mackinaw River and went to Secor to buy a corn planter. It rained hard while he was gone and he was compelled to stay overnight with friends until the river was again low enough to cross with a team and wagon. When he approached the swollen stream the next day, he was apprehensive about the safety of crossing and he forgot to hook the extra fastenings on the hollow-box wagon top to the wheel gear. He guided his horses through the shallow water near the bank, but when he came to the swift part of the current, he felt the reins suddenly shorten. Immediately he knew what was happening but it was too late to do anything. The horses crossed over, taking the front wheels with them while Adam found himself floating downstream sitting precariously atop the wagon box. The helpless man realized his peril and he began to curse and swear in a manner which, after long years of experience, he was very proficient.

The preacher and his sons who were working in the field bordering the river, heard the man's oaths and they saw his wagon box pitch in the swirling water, tossing Adam about like a leaf. The drowning man would lunge after the wagon and lose it again after a moment's hold. In desperation, the man tried to free himself of his heavy, water-soaked, military cape for it was a millstone about his neck and hindered him in his efforts to save himself. Failure to free himself of it brought forth fresh volleys of cursing.

The boys secretly enjoyed the spectacle, thinking the cold bath was a just punishment for a haughty man like Adam. However, they followed their father's order to pull down a vine of the thick, climbing grape that wound around the trunks of the trees along the bank. They heard him instructing Adam to try to keep his hold on the wagon box and guide it near the shore where they were when it neared the approaching bend in the river. They heard him add, "Stop swearing and pray, it'll do you more good!" Adam feebly tried the suggestion and saw his answer in the form of a strong, rope-like vine being thrown out to him. Once he was safely on shore, the frightened, dripping man slinked homeward without saying a word, his wet cape hugging his body close.

The next day, Joe retrieved the back wheels of Adam's wagon and pushed them up to the barnyard. While everyone was inspecting them and speculating upon the possible effect the accident might have on Adam, that man walked shamefacedly into the yard. Silently, he held out a roll of several bills toward his benefactor, but the good man refused them and added, "I don't want your money. I'm happy enough to see that God spared your life!" This irked the man and he cried out, "If you don't take it, I'll throw it on the ground!" He finally succeeded in giving it to the boys who probably felt they were entitled to a little remuneration for their part in the rescue.

Adam's conversion has never been reported, but it is said that in the days that followed, he treated his neighbor, the preacher, with greater respect.

Christian Reeser's reluctance toward accepting money for his services was not always fully appreciated by his sacrificing wife. She sometimes remonstrated with him for putting a generous amount of money in his hat before he began passing it for the offering at church. She reminded him of their poverty at certain times of

the year and of the fact that he was paid nothing for all his walking and swimming across the icy river to help people who possessed much more than they, as far as worldly goods were concerned. But his only answer was "Do you think I can start the hat around with nothing in it and expect the people to give freely.?"

Her attitude can be understood more easily when one considers the difficulties under which she raised her twelve children. It had been especially trying for one who was not trained in girlhood for the sacrifices she was constantly called on to make. Some of her children have recalled a period of extreme discouragement one evening when they were out gathering cabbage to make kraut on the morrow. Their father was gone on one of his frequent trips, at which times her responsibilities were doubly heavy. She stood gazing at the moon, lost in deep thought. Then she mused, half-aloud, "Oh, moon, you're shining now on my home in Germany. If I could only be there now! I'd walk all the way back if I could."

Then while she was on the subject of the past, she spoke for the first and only time of the man in Philadelphia to whom she had first been engaged. She had heard he had become wealthy in the business in which he was still struggling when she broke her relationship with him. Aloud, she wondered if life would have been easier if she had married him instead of the minister who always sacrificed.

Although Minister Reeser felt his wife sometimes worried too much about the temporal side of life, yet he realized that without her brave sacrifices, he would never have been able to carry on the spiritual ministry that he did. For her sake, he was glad when they were able to retire on a small place near Eureka, where she could live a less burdensome life. After she was gone he keenly missed the grey-haired companion who had sat by his side so many times, reading the Bible to him. Even though he continued to preach after she died, it can be said that his active period of ministry came to a close around the time of her passing.

Three and one-half years later, in 1906, he moved to Missouri. His congregation sent the following article concerning his leaving to a church paper called The Gospel Witness, in which it was published in the November 13, 1906 issue:

"Bro. Reeser, who is over 87 years old and intends

to move to Caso County, Missouri, where he will make his home with his son-in-law, David Ulrich, preached his farewell sermon last Sunday, basing his remarks on John 10 : 1-14.

"He told us the nature of the sheep, admonishing us to obey the good Shephard. His eyesight is failing but he still has a clear voice and a good memory.

"In the afternoon sixty of us met with him at the home of one of his grandchildren and spent the time in singing, interspersed with talks by several brethren, showing the need of a union between young and old.

"We regret to see him leave as he has labored here as a minister of the Gospel for about forty years. We wish him God-speed."

CHAPTER VI

FRUIT IN OLD AGE

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree . . . they shall bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright . . ." Ps 92 : 12, 14, 15.

Not many people wait until they are seventy-six years old to retire; fewer persons live for twenty-eight years after they have retired. Yet such was the case with Christian Reeser. Some of the people who had witnessed his godly life, felt that his healthy old age was a reward from Heaven. However, when anyone suggested that possibility, he rebuked them, declaring that the blessing he enjoyed from God had been given in spite of the little good he had done in past years, not because of it.

To those who requested his recipe for longevity, he merely advocated hard work and application of the simple rules of health. He never became guilty of over-eating in old age. His evening meal was little more than a simple bowl of milk and bread. Perhaps one reason for his continued good health lay in the fact that he daily worked outside on the small acreage he purchased just north of Eureka in 1895, the year of his retirement. The farm had been rented to his son-in-law, Benjamin Ummel. In 1902, he sold the 296 acres to his son, Samuel for \$10,000. He was glad to see the land he had tended so long pass into one of his son's hands.

From this time on, many incidents in his life are remembered by his grandchildren. One of them, Debolt Reeser, tells the following story which reveals his grandfather's vision and unselfishness after he had passed eighty years:

"One Fourth of July morning when I was about 15, Pa told me to get out the horses and plough the small field by Grandpa's house. I was really 'put out' about that. I wanted to go to the celebration with the rest of the boys, and I knew it would take most of the day to do that job. I didn't see why he couldn't wait another day to have it done, and I took out my spite by ploughing too deep. The top soil was really shallow at that place and I turned it under as far as possible so his garden wouldn't grow. Grandpa came out then, bringing a yardstick to measure

the depth of my ploughing. 'That's just right,' he said, 'just right for an orchard.' I felt like I had been fooled and asked him, 'What makes you think you're going to live long enough to eat off the orchard you'll plant here?' He just kindly answered, 'Maybe I won't, but other people will'."

Such an attitude commanded admiration from a lad of fifteen, and he was happy to see his grandfather live to eat some of the fruit himself.

About a year after that incident, Barbara Reeser became sick and died rather suddenly. Her death was caused by complications resulting from a weak heart and gallstones. A newspaper clipping dated April 2, 1903, gives the following information regarding her death:

"Mrs. Christian Reeser, Sr., died at her late home in the north part of the city last Thursday night (March 26, 1903) at 10:30 o'clock, aged 71 years, 11 months, and 23 days. She had been sick only two days and her death consequently was very sudden. She had not been in good health for some time but no sudden termination was looked for.

"Two years ago she had a severe fall and had not been in good health since that time . . . For the past nine years she had been living in Eureka, but for forty years had been a resident of this vicinity, having lived on the farm south of town. Beside an aged husband, the deceased leaves a family of eleven children, all of whom except Jake are residents of this city and vicinity. The funeral was held Sunday afternoon from the house conducted by Rev. John Smith of Metamora assisted by P. D. Schertz. Interment in Roanoke Mennonite Cemetery."

Another yellowed, undated clipping gives facts concerning her birth and early life which have already been included in these pages. It further adds, "Mrs. Reeser was a woman of fine character and was a devoted wife and mother." The loneliness brought on by her departure was almost unbearable for Grandfather Reeser. Their 51 years of life together could not be forgotten easily. He had hoped to see her rest for awhile after so many years of hard work. Her absence was especially noticed when he wished to prepare a sermon. His own eyesight was growing dim, and he was reminded of the countless number of times when she had assisted him by her efficient manner of reading aloud. Nevertheless, he continued to preach occasionally, as he was called upon.

For three years after his wife's death, he lived in Eureka where Lena kept house for him. Then he welcomed the opportunity to go with David Ulrichs to Missouri, where his daughter, Barbara, and her husband had located several years before. He apparently enjoyed this change because he expressed keen disappointment when, after several years, the Ulrichs decided to move back to Eureka.

For a while after his return from Missouri, he lived with his son, Christian, on his farm near Eureka. Here he helped with small tasks around the house, such as churning the butter. As soon as that operation was finished, he expected to be given a large glass of buttermilk for his work. When the family began selling the butter milk and consequently, ceased giving out large portions, he pretended not to hear when he was called to churn.

In company with his son, Christian, Grandfather Reeser took a long trip to the West sometime after the turn of the century. They went as far as Spokane, Washington, by train. Then they turned back and got off at Nampa, Idaho, where three of his children, John, Fannie and Jacob and their families awaited their coming. In spite of his age and the distance, he insisted on walking all the way out to their respective farms. The grandchildren were greatly interested in the remarkable energetic man they had heard so much about, and asked him how he liked the train ride. He confessed that he had moved to the inside seat when the train went around steep mountain curves. During his ten-day stay in Idaho he preached at the local Mennonite church. He spoke from the pulpits in other states on the return eastward.

During the last decade of his life he again made his home with his daughter, Annie Ulrich. He spent many hours in Eureka, especially in the vicinity of the barber shop. He became a familiar figure in the streets, followed by his constant companion, a small black rat terrier whom he led with a strap and called, "Penny." One day he came home with a sly smile on his face. "What do you think I've done now?" he asked, and then answered himself, "I ate ice cream, the dish and all!" Thus he described his first ice cream cone.

In those later years, he continued to be neat in his appearance. On Sundays, he wore his long-tailed jacket, white shirt, and tie, which was a thin piece of material looped over once. His appearance at that time of his life has been described thus: "He was slightly built and

small featured. He wore his hair cut long like the Amish of today. His hair and beard were snow-white and silky, giving him the appearance of a saint." Another person said, "He looked like a flower."

On pleasant days, he often walked out to the coal mines near Roanoke to talk with the French-speaking workers there. He deeply enjoyed conversing with someone in his native tongue and asking about changes in his boyhood country.

There are witnesses to the fact that he went swimming when he neared the century mark. In company with his son, Christian, and his grandson, Bill Reeser, he rode in an automobile down to the deep place in the Mackinaw where he had swum so many times in his life. Evidently he could not resist the temptation to try it once more.

The old man's love for singing and story-telling did not diminish with age. From his rocking chair he charmed his grandchildren by telling the same stories over and over. As he rocked, he often sang a French song about Napoleon, and after the song, commented upon that man's rise and downfall. "His first mistake," he always began, "was made when he divorced Josephine."

The rest of the story of Christian Reeser can perhaps be told best by quoting from newspaper clippings written on the occasions of his last birthday anniversaries. These were taken from four local newspapers, The Daily Pantagraph (Bloomington,) The Woodford County Journal (Eureka), The Roanoke Post, and the Tazewell County Reporter. In addition to the information which they give, these articles are interesting in that they give us a sample of the journalism of thirty years ago. They are quoted without any changes or corrections. Some mistakes can be found in these reports. Those of consequence are noted in parentheses. The dates of most of these notices had been cut off when they were clipped from the newspapers.

In September, 1917, the following appeared: "Christian Reeser, Sr., passed the 97th milestone in life's journey Friday, Sept. 15, and is only lacking three years to reach the century mark. He is remarkably hale and hearty and bids fair to keep well. On Wednesday he stepped into the barber shop with the aid of his walking stick, his sole companion on all of his travels. He shaves only on Saturdays, so his shaving on Wednesday was something unusual. A question to him, "Why the

shave on Wednesday, Mr. Reeser?" brought this reply: "My granddaughter is to be married September 14 and the following day is my 97th birthday, and to be in favorable shape for the two important occasions I think I can start an extra shave." He was shaved and attended the wedding of his granddaughter, Miss Emma Reeser, to Clayton Gut. . . . Mr. Reeser is one of Woodford County's pioneer who lived on the Mackinaw bottoms for years where he raised a large family, following farming all the time. He still does some preaching at the Christian Mennonite church where he is an active member despite his advanced years. His many friends in Eureka are pleased to know of his good health and wish him a continuation of the same."

A short while later: "Grandpap Risser, 97 years of age, voted for Wilson. He said he cast his vote for James K. Polk in 1845 and has voted the Democratic ticket every time, except that he voted twice for Lincoln, and Lincoln did not keep us out of war."

In June, 1920, The Daily Pantagraph printed the following article which was headed: "Ninety-Nine Years in Mennonite Faith:" "Christian Reeser, of Eureka ninety-nine years of age, still leans upon his cane in the Mennonite church and exhorts the younger generation to follow the path indicated by the scriptures. 'I just admonish them,' says Grandfather Reeser, 'For the last ten years I haven't used a text.' He will be one hundred years old September 15th.

But there was a day when congregations in Indiana, Arkansas, and Idaho, and all thru the west harked from their pews as the old elder's exhortations echoed in the meeting houses.

For a century, lasting three short months, Grandfather Reeser has lived in the Mennonite faith . . .

Grandfather Reeser has twelve children. He has lost count of his grandchildren. There are too many. His daughter, Mrs. Dave Ulrich, of Eureka, says there are eighty-one of them. As for great-grandchildren, the task of finding them is too difficult. There must be no less than fifty of them scattered over the face of the earth.

. . . Tho' he reached the prairies of this state when he had passed middle life, yet found it far from being as modern as it is now.

'Eureka,' says Mr. Reeser, 'Had a lot more business in those days.' He says there were thousands of hogs

driven to town and killed at the two slaughter houses and the meat shipped by quarters to England. 'At that time they did not scrape the hair off the hogs as they do now.' says Mr. Reeser, 'but dropped them by chain over a hot fire and singed off their hair.' Two grist mills supplied the area with an abundance of ground grain . . .'

During the latter years of his life he has lived on thirteen acres of land near Eureka where he has had two cows, a horse, a dog, and some chickens. Now he is too old to potter about garden work at all so he sits in the sunshine on pleasant days and watches the road men and children . . .

'I never allowed them to take a picture of me,' says Grandfather Reeser. It is against his religious beliefs. But the pictures have been taken, however, when he has not known it. His sturdy old face, framed in white flowing whiskers, is too great a favorite with his many friends and his great family to be lost when he has left this world. So it was not difficult to find a likeness of Christian Reeser and put it in the Pantagraph."

In spite of his requests to the contrary, the children, grandchildren, and friends of the aged man would not let his one-hundredth birthday pass without a celebration in his honor. The following notice appeared in the local newspapers: "The 100th birthday of Christian Reeser will occur on Tuesday, September 16, and a reception will be held in his honor at the home of his daughter, Mrs. David Ulrich, in the city that afternoon from 3 to 5 p.m., to which the people of the community are cordially invited. There will be short talks by Prof. B. J. Radford of Eureka and Rev. Strubhar of Washington."

The century mark was finally reached. The occasion was attended by several reporters, two of whose accounts of the event are included here. The early history of the centenarian's life as they included it in the following accounts is omitted here because it was included in the first chapter.

From the Roanoke Post: "LIVES TO 100 YEARS—BIRTHDAY SEPT. 15—BIG FAMILY REUNION"

"To attain their 100th birthday is an experience few people experience. Christian Reeser, who now lives at Eureka with his daughter, Mrs. David Ulrich, reached that remarkable milestone September 15. Mr. Reeser lived for a number of years near Roanoke when the family lived on their farm three miles south.

A big family reunion was held in honor of the event and all the children came for miles and miles, some coming from as far as Oregon and the Pacific slope.

Dinner for the big reunion was held at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Ulrich, as Father Reeser would not consent to go any other place, that being just home to him.

Church services were held at the Christian Mennonite church on last Sunday in honor of Mr. Reeser's birthday. They were attended by many friends and acquaintances.

Mr. Reeser stepped up to the pulpit and gave a very strong talk, as he has occupied the pulpit for years when he was young and vigorous. Among those in the congregation was an old gentleman from Tremont, with whom he boarded while still in France.

His granddaughters were not to be outshone for they prepared a cake which bore 100 lighted candles. Grandpa was requested to blow them out, but this humorous event he declined with thanks. The Eureka band desired to play for the family gathering, but this, too, he declined with thanks as grandpa just wanted to rest and sit in quietness. About all he cared to do was to listen to the conversation and talk with his family and those about him . . .

Beside being an ardent worker Mr. Reeser was a preacher in the Mennonite Apostolic church (the name "Apostolic" refers to another local denomination) and seldom, if ever, missed speaking at a service. He speaks German, French, and English and while preaching speaks German.

Those here for the reunion are as follows: John of Nampa, Idaho; Mrs. David Ulrich, Roanoke township; Mrs. Samuel Ulrich, Albany, Oregon; Mrs. Benj. Ummel, Garthage, Mo; Samuel, Montgomery township; Jacob, Albany, Oregon; Benjamin, Congerville; Miss Lena Reeser, Peoria; David, Congerville; Peter, Seattle, Washington."

From The Daily Pantagraph: "CHRISTIAN REESER LIVES 100 YEARS"

The sixth and seventh of September, 1919, is a marked epoch for this vicinity since one of its residents has the exceptional honor and Grace from God to pass in the realm of another 100 years. There were three services held at the Mennonite church four miles north of Eureka last Sunday in honor of the event (actually, only

two services were held at the church on Sunday). The time was spent in a religious way to the satisfaction of Rev. Reeser, more favorably known as Grandpa Reeser. There were in attendance at the services many from different states, as far west as Nampa, Idaho (Oregon and Washington were also represented).

At the noon hour in the home of David Ulrich a dinner was eaten as guests of Grandpa Reeser, one table had the unique experience of having around the board 12 men whose average ages were 80 and one half years. The conversation was carried on in three languages, English, French, and German. The moments were very profitably spent, the experience of years back were brought to the present, they lived in another world, the young man could but listen and tell what he heard of those days. One surely must say that the present generation is enjoying many blessings brought about through the hardships of these men of past days, yet one withal wonders whether the rugged body and mind they possess, considering their opportunities, is not beyond those of today who are contending for a way to live without much work, and then extravagantly spend that which they thus earned. The economy they practiced in those days is worthy of praise.

One also loves to hear them speak of going to the House of God to worship, not in automobiles, oiled roads and well warmed church buildings, but often horseback, thru mud, fording streams, making many a weary mile. One surely thinks that this is the material on which this country is built. Many of the present day are helping to destroy thru Godless living such an heritage of good.

On Saturday evening Rev. Greaser from Fisher, Illinois, preached. He formerly came from Alsace Lorraine. He has been in America for about 40 years.

On Sunday morning Rev. Sebastian Gerig of Wayland, Iowa, preached in the German language, and there were short addresses made by other old ministers. The one most appreciated was by Grandpa Reeser, never to be forgotten, altho 100 years old. It seemed one could feel the tremor of the pulpit when he spoke, his voice being so vigorous. The kindly greeting to all, young and old, warmed his message. He urged absolute adherence to the whole Word of God. He manifested an unshaken Faith. What was appreciated most was this statement, tho hard to translate with full force into the English language. "My sun is fast sinking, my days will be few, in

these I still want to live them to the glory of Christ. It is years ago, probably 75, I gave God my decision, and that was for life; in this faith I want to live, and in this Faith I want to die, in this let no man seek to change my purpose."

After the service many wished him Godspeed, and many days. Even the young people enjoyed the session, tho many could not understand the language.

In the evening an open meeting was held for all to speak, many responded, old and young, after which Rev. Clayton F. Derstine, of Eureka, Illinois, preached in the English language, on the theme, 'The Glory of Old Age,' 'Thou shalt come to thy grave in a ripe old age, as a shock of corn in its season.' Job 5 : 26. 'An hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness.' Prov. 16 : 31.

The following history will be of interest to the older inhabitants especially . . . "Christian Reeser came to Montgomery township, Woodford County, Illinois, in 1858 from Delaware County, Indiana, by wagon immigration. In 1895 he decided to quit farming and in doing so, moved to Eureka, Illinois, at which place he lived ten years. In 1903, at the age of seventy-two, his wife died. He then made his home in Missouri, with his daughter, Mrs. Ulrich, and came back with her to Illinois about four years later. He lives with her in Eureka at present.

In 1867 he was called to the ministry in the Mennonite Church, with which he united when a young man. Living in good Faith, he has carried on the Lord's work successfully, and is still willing to proclaim the Truth of the Gospel. At the ripe old age of 100 years, he is still able to get around alone and is enjoying reasonable health and strength."

Bishop C. F. Derstine, who was present at the services described above, has given a description of his message in the German language: "This is a gist of the testimony. He leaned hard on his cane. His voice was vibrant. I could feel the tremor on the rostrum as he spoke thus: 'Ich bin sehr alt. Wie ich jung war, hab ich den Heiland Jesus Christus augenommen. In dem Glauben lasst mich leben. In dem Glauben, lasst mich sterben Und in dem Glauben sollt mich niemand verstorn.' This is a literal translation: 'I have grown very old. When I was a young man, I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior. In this faith let me live. In this faith let me

die. And in this faith, let no man disturb me."

During the following year, two of the local newspapers commented upon the fact that he still voted in the presidential election:

"Speaking of aged voters, "How's this?" Christian Reeser of Eureka, aged 101 years, went to the polls Tuesday and voted. He has cast his ballot in twenty-one presidential elections. He has voted the Democratic ticket ever since Polk was elected in 1844, except in the year 1861 when he voted for Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Reeser has been able to walk up town during the summer and his facilities are unusually good for a man of his age . . .

"While no one doubts that Old Man Methuselah is still entitled to wear the championship belt by reason of his battle with Old Father Time, there are no records of indicate that his name ever appeared on the poll books nor that the city election commission ever compelled him to register. In view of this we would venture the assertion that Mr. Reeser, combining age and political experience, has the edge on the famous old person of Biblical days."

"He was . . . probably the oldest man in the United States to cast a vote that day."

When he had passed the century mark by two years, the following headlines and article appeared. Those paragraphs which were a repetition of previous articles are omitted here:

"CHRISTIAN REESER, 102—RESIDENT OF EUREKA TODAY CELEBRATES BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY ATTAINED BY VERY FEW.

"Christian Reeser, Sr., of Eureka attained the ripe old age of 102 years today. Mr. Reeser is a very remarkable man as he enjoys such good health that he has been able to make his usual weekly trips up town during the summer. The past few days, however, he has not been feeling as well as usual. He makes his home with his daughter, Mrs. David Ulrich, where he receives the best care. His son, C. B. Reeser, presented him with a silver-plated snuff box, which he brought from Florida on his recent trip, as he is fond of using snuff . . .

". . . Two years have elapsed since that memorable occasion (of his 100th birthday) and today Mr. Reeser is 102 years old, and is apparently in good health and spirits. His mind is clear and he takes keen interest in public affairs and those of his church. He is able to walk

down town every week and he has every prospect of living another two years . . ."

On September 15, 1919, the Eureka newspaper announced his 103rd birthday. Besides giving the usual historical facts, it added, "During the time he served as a Mennonite minister, Mr. Reeser met and made the acquaintance of some of the country's great men, as Lincoln, Douglas, Yates, and Grant. A large part of his pastoral work was in central Illinois and he often had to walk hundreds of miles to fill an engagement, he says⁵ . . . His eyesight began to fail him about a year ago, he says

"Scores of his friends are expected to visit and congratulate him at his home on Friday."

In spite of the newspaper reporter's prediction on his 102nd birthday, he was not destined to live another two years. His 103rd was his last. Three months and 29 days after his birthday, his life on earth ended. About two months before his death, he became bedfast with weakness. He did not seem to be afflicted with any particular disease or suffering during that time and enjoyed having people visit him and sing to him. Nevertheless, he gradually grew weaker and the use of his senses dimmed. The day before his death, he was heard to utter the words, "Come, good home." Early on the morning of January 14, he asked for a drink of water, and when it was brought to him, showed himself capable of holding the cup. Then after he had spoken several sentences and reclined back on his pillow, his life ebbed away from the earth where it had dwelt for over a century.

Those who attended at his bedside were unable to grasp the meaning of his last words, because they were spoken in French, the language in which he had first learned to express himself. But they witnessed the solemn beauty which attended the passing of a life well lived.

5. The word "often" is overstated. He usually walked the eight miles to the church where he preached, but it was only seldom that he walked as far as 100 miles. He took several days or a week to make those longer trips, stopping for the night or sometimes for several days with friends. Most of his calls from a long distance were requests to attend at funerals, in which cases there would not have been time to walk.

Again, we quote from the newspaper for additional information on his death and funeral services:

"...His death was the result of the infirmities of old age, and not disease. The greater part of the past summer he did not leave the house and for some weeks he has been confined to his bed, where he was always tenderly ministered to by his family. He is survived by eleven children . . . He also leaves 82 grandchildren and 101 great-grandchildren.

"Funeral services were held at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Ulrich, at 11 o'clock Wednesday morning and at the Roanoke Mennonite church in the afternoon at one o'clock with burial in the church cemetery.

"The services at the house were in charge of Rev. C. F. Derstine of Eureka, assisted by Rev. V. Strubhar of Washington and Rev. Samuel Garber of Tremont. Prof. B. J. Radford of this city also spoke a few words. At the church the services were conducted by Revs. Andrew Schrock, C. F. Derstine and Samuel Garber. Mr. Schrock spoke in German . . .

"Among those present from a distance were David Zimmerman of Bloomington; Mrs. Tony Fleischman of Davenport, Iowa; Jos. Householder of Faurbury. All the children were present except those living in the far west. The pall bearers were six of the grandsons: Peter Ulrich, Emanuel Ulrich, William, Charlie, Clarence, and Christian Reeser."

The theme of the main sermon, preached by Andrew Schrock, was "Serving One's Own Generation." He used Acts 13: 36 for a text. "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers and saw corruption."

THE GENEALOGY OF CHRISTIAN REESER*

Christian Reeser, Sr., born Sept. 15, 1819, died Jan. 14, 1923; married April 25, 1852 to Barbara Zimmerman who was born April 4, 1831, and died March 26, 1903.

I. John, born March 13, 1853, died 1929; married in 1878 to Phoebe Miller.

A. Lenora, born March 11, 1881; married Charles Strubahar in 1903.

(1. Esther, born Sept. 12, 1907; married Wayne
TWINS Amberg in 1930.

(2. Ralph Edward, born Sept. 12, 1907, died at birth.

B. Ella, born Aug. 5, 1882; married Lee Lantz in 1902.

1. Wilbur, born Dec. 11, 1903, married Frances Faris in 1924.

a. Dorothy, born March 15, 1925.

b. Donald, born May 29, 1927; married Connie Shuck in 1948.

(1) Vicki Lynn, born September 16, 1949.

(2) Stanley Michael, born December 20, 1950.

c. Dean, born February 2, 1933.

2. Lowell, born Dec. 15, 1906; married Thelma Rosemond Johnson in 1930.

a. Loujean, born September 16, 1932.

3. Evans, born Dec. 11, 1910; married Ruth Highberger in 1933.

* Note — Requests came to have a family tree drawn and included in this book. Since the descendants number over 700 the idea was impractical. Instead, a genealogy has been prepared in outline form. Christian Reeser's children will be found following the Roman numerals; his grandchildren after the capital letters; great-grandchildren after arabic numbers; great-great grandchildren after small letters; and great-great-great grandchildren after arabic numbers in parentheses.

A concluding chart gives a total picture of the number of descendants of each of his children, and shows the total number living and deceased. It is interesting to notice that among the descendants, eight sets of twins and one set of triplets have been born.

- a. Elmer Lee, born May 16, 1937.
- b. Brian Evans, born Nov. 8, 1951.
- 4. Mary Elizabeth, born Aug. 29, 1916; married Floyd Sharp in 1943.
 - a. Martha Jean, born Oct. 4, 1945
 - b. Daniel Lee, born March 8, 1947.
 - c. David Dean, born March 27, 1951.

C. Elmer, born Dec. 28, 1888, married Jewel Summers in 1931.

II Anna Mary, born Dec. 17, 1855, died Oct. 12, 1941; married in 1874 to David Ulrich who died July 7, 1934.

A. Barbara, born Aug. 14, 1875; married to Andrew Shertz in 1900.

1. Stella, born Dec. 14, 1906; married to Oliver Yoder in 1925.

a. Robert, born Dec. 18, 1926; married Doris Zehr in 1946.

(1) Michael, born Nov. 15, 1947.

(2) Susan, born Feb. 20, 1949.

b. Anna, born Sept. 28, 1929; married Sam Gerber in 1947.

(1) John, born August 10, 1949.

(2) Steven, born June 6, 1951.

c. Wilma, born April 2, 1935.

B. Anna, born April 19, 1877, died in 1942.

C. Christian, born Jan. 29, 1875, died May 6, 1945; married in 1904 to Elizabeth Shertz who died in 1926; married in 1930 to Martha Garber.

1. Ralph, born Nov. 19, 1904; married in 1928 to Della Smith.

a. Roger, born August 30, 1931.

b. Carol, born November 1, 1938.

2. Loren, born Dec. 21, 1905; married in 1931 to Luella Yoder.

a. Byron, born February 16, 1933.

b. Janice, born September 23, 1936.

c. Kathryn, born July 12, 1944.

3. Wilmer, born April 9, 1907; married in 1933 to Myrtal Harvey.

4. Richard, born August 9, 1908; married Feb. 28,

- 1943, to Elva Martin.
- a. Lowell, born September 12, 1949.
 - 5. Lorene, born Dec. 23, 1910; married in 1929 to Ezra Wagner.
 - a. Marilyn, born March 9, 1936.
 - b. Richard, born February 10, 1938.
 - 6. Reva, born Aug. 23, 1912; married in 1929 to Wilbur Noe.
 - a. Shirley, born September 30, 1931.
 - 7. Mona, born Dec. 13, 1914; married in Aug. 1938 to Camiel Schoonaert.
 - a. James, born March 20, 1940.
 - b. Gary, born April 24, 1943.
 - 8. Robert, born Sept. 4, 1917; married in 1946 to Gladys Terp.
 - a. James, born October 14, 1948.
 - 9. Marvin, born Sept. 12, 1918; married Aug. 14, 1941 to Maurine Sommers.
 - 10. Clayton, born Oct. 19, 1920; married in 1941 to Ruth Reeb.

Two adopted children:

 - a. James Michael, born July 28, 1948.
 - b. Robert Lee, born April 28, 1950.
 - 11. Elizabeth, born Dec. 13, 1923; married in 1941 to Arthur Gerber.
 - a. Phyllis, born November 8, 1943.
 - b. Beth Ann, born February 25, 1948.
 - c. Jo Ann, born January 28, 1950.

- D. Emma, born Feb. 21, 1881; married in 1903 to August Shertz who died October 16, 1939.
- 1. Lloyd, born April 25, 1905; married in 1933 to Clara Zehr who died Mar. 28, 1938. Two children born to this union:
 - a. Richard, born May 24, 1943.
 - b. Jean, born June 24, 1937.

Married in 1941 to Vera Stalter; three children to this union:

 - c. Jay Howard, born June 25, 1943.
 - d. Vietta Lucille, born October 14, 1946.
 - e. June Cheryl, born April 1, 1948.
 - 2. Irene D., born Dec. 1, 1906; married in 1934 to Emery Heiser.
 - a. Rosalie, born June 20, 1935.

- b. Jeanette, born November 5, 1936.
- c. Roger, born November 5, 1936.
- d. Jerry, born April 9, 1941.
- 3. Ray, born Oct. 4, 1909; married in 1934 to Dora Zehr.
 - a. Wayne E., born March 14, 1936.
 - b. Louanne K., born October 25, 1941.
 - c. Clifford R., born November 4, 1945.
 - d. Dale E., born January 28, 1947.
 - e. Linda S., born April 20, 1948.
- 4. Blanche, born Nov. 23, 1916; married in 1936 to Alva Greaser who died in 1950.
 - a. Kathleen, born October 19, 1940.
 - b. Marcia, born June 20, 1943.
 - c. Tonya Lee, born January 23, 1948.
- 5. Hilda, born May 25, 1918; married in 1940 to Raymond Heiser.
 - a. Lowell, born August 24, 1941.
 - b. Sharilyn, born July 5, 1946.
 - c. Suzette, born July 12, 1948.
 - d. Arlys Kay, born January 11, 1952.

E. Peter, born May 14, 1883; married in 1909 to Louise Shertz.

- 1. Edna Grace, born Nov. 22, 1912; married in 1937 to Ralph Litwiller.
 - a. Wendel Ralph, born December 14, 1938.
 - b. Roger Wayne, born October 10, 1941.
 - c. Robert Duane, born October 19, 1946.
 - d. Derryl Gene, born Aug. 12, 1949; died Sept. 8, 1949.
- 2. Beulah Mae, born August 24, 1914.
- 3. Margaret Louisa, born October 17, 1915.

F. Elizabeth, born July 3, 1885; married Jan. 12, 1905 to Amos Shertz.

- 1. Harold Joseph, born January 19, 1906.
- 2. Violet Mae, born December 12, 1910.
- 3. Arthur Lee, born Aug. 1, 1913; married Nov. 14, 1937, to Dorothy Kauffman.
 - a. An adopted daughter, Marilyn Kay, born Sept. 23, 1946.

G. Fannie Marie, born June 24, 1887; married in 1905 to William Schrock.

1. Roland Ray, born Oct. 1, 1907; married in 1929 to Mary Helen Buck.

a. Mary Helen, born March 12, 1930.

b. Janice Marie, born October 17, 1939.

c. Leise Anne, born May 26, 1946.

2. Glen W., born Sept. 23, 1908; married in 1928 to Meona Nofziger.

a. Robert Glenn, born November 21, 1929.

b. Betty Mae, born July 10, 1932; married in 1949 to J. Bachman.

(1) Stanley Jay, born July 10, 1950.

c. Phyllis Jane, born October 5, 1936.

d. Donna Lou, born October 18, 1939.

e. Glenda Christine, born December 29, 1944.

f. Helen Jean, born March 11, 1950.

3. Ruth Lulla, born Jan. 21, 1911; married in 1932 to Wilbur Albrecht.

a. Rachel Ann, born November 3, 1933.

b. Doris Mae, born November 13, 1935.

c. Shirley Jean, born January 20, 1939.

4. Vernon Russel, born May 2, 1914, married Alma Connel in 1935.

5. Helen Marie, born April 27, 1918; married in 1948 to Clyde Miller.

a. William Clyde, born April 2, 1949.

6. Mary Ann, born Oct. 4, 1921; married in 1941 to Harold Flannegan.

a. Terry Gene, born May 29, 1944.

b. William Patrick, born March 16, 1947.

H. David Elias, born Oct. 7, 1889; married in 1913 to Nora Wagner who died in 1951.

1. Margaret Eleanor, born June 13, 1914; married Vernon Heiser in 1937.

(a. Judith Ann, born April 30, 1940.

TWINS

(b. June Ellen, born April 30, 1940; died at birth.

c. Sharon Jean, born March 2, 1943.

d. Kenneth Jay, born April 10, 1948.

e. Sally Sue, born January 23, 1951.

2. Dorothy Mae, born November 24, 1916.

3. Willis Russel, born Sept. 13, 1920; married Lois Ogle in 1947.

4. Anna Mae, born Dec. 17, 1923; married Andrew Funk in 1949.
 - a. Sandra Ann, born August 22, 1950.
 5. Robert Daniel, born April 5, 1929; died in 1929.
 6. Eldon Ray, born Oct. 21, 1934.
-
- I. Ella, born June 1, 1892; married Emanuel Shertz in 1914.
 1. Evelyn May, adopted daughter born Dec. 1912; married Alton Zehr in 1934.
 - a. Ronald Gene, adopted son April 20, 1941.
 - b. Rita Sue, adopted daughter born Feb. 26, 1947.
 - J. Emanuel, born June 8, 1895; married Matilda Shertz in 1919.
 1. Wilfred David, born Dec. 3, 1920; married Betty Stutzman in 1944.
 - a. David Lee, born November 11, 1948.
 - b. Daniel Wayne, born January 14, 1950.
 - c. Ronald, born September 11, 1951.
 2. Kenneth Eugene, born Nov. 9, 1922; married Ruby Reeb in 1950.
 - a. Rollin, born August 18, 1951.
 3. Mildred Berniece, born July 14, 1924; married Leonard Reeb in 1947.
 - a. Carol Jean, born July 22, 1949.
 4. Geneva Belle, born Jan. 18, 1927; married Vernon Myers in 1949.
 - a. Rebecka June, born July 28, 1951.
 5. Emanuel Jr., born July 6, 1929.
 6. Harold Dean, born Jan. 5, 1931; married Lila Gerber, January 2, 1952.
 7. Franklin Allen, born April 16, 1933.
 - K. Viola Alvina, born Jan. 13, 1898; married John Harnish in 1919.
 1. Mary Elizabeth, born June 17, 1920; married Don Gilkeson in 1941.
 - a. Franklin Wesley, born June 15, 1941.
 - b. Emma Sue, born September 13, 1942.
 - c. Robert Howard, born October 19, 1943.
 - d. Barbara Ellen, born July 30, 1948.
 - e. John Charles, born December 20, 1951.
 2. James Russel, born Feb. 25, 1922; married to Donna Hartzlwe in 1946.

3. John L. Jr., born Aug. 16, 1924; married Berniece Klinglesmith in 1950.
4. Charles Wilbur, born August 20, 1927.
5. Roland Eugene, born March 9, 1929; died June 4, 1940.

III Joseph, born August 18, 1857, died Nov. 21, 1895; married Feb. 9, 1888 to Emma Baker who died July 13, 1945.

A. Elizabeth B., born Feb. 3, 1889; married Dec. 11, 1915 to Walter Heiner.

B. Jacob Christian, born Oct. 4, 1890; married Jan. 14, 1915, to Alta Murdock.

1. Lillian Maurine, born Oct. 19, 1916; married to Philo Green on May 15, 1940.

a. Philo Alton, born February 21, 1943.

b. Linda Sue, born December 15, 1946.

c. Marsha Jean, born October 1, 1948.

2. Vivian Murdock, born April 3, 1918; married October 20, 1940 to Walter Hamel.

3. Richard J. born July 27, 1924; married Sept. 6, 1946 to Etta Sparks.

a. Sharon Lynn, born October 3, 1949.

b. Richard Dale, born January 3, 1951.

c.

4. Rose Jeanette, born March 7, 1926; married Albert Higday June 13, 1943.

a. James, born March 24, 1946.

C. Ella M., born Aug. 1892; married Dec. 19, 1928 to Le Roy Hyde, who died October 2, 1946.

D. Leah L., born April 16, 1894.

IV Christian B., born March 7, 1859, died Oct. 28, 1940; married Jan 24, 1884 to Dora Householder who died April 10, 1935; married Oct. 8, 1938 to Mary Burch.

A. Mary Ann, born March 8, 1885; died March 11, 1885.

B. Debolt, born April 28, 1887; married Dec. 7, 1910 to Lydia Stalter who died in 1919; married June 1, 1933 to Barbara Haas.

1. Dorothy K., born Oct. 3, 1912; died in 1926.
 2. Lester C., born Aug. 30, 1914; married Nov. 9, 1945 to Elma Shoup.
 - a. Charlotte Roberta, born Sept 29, 1947.
 3. Klista F., born Dec. 17, 1916; married Feb. 15, 1944 to Victor Roszhart.
 - a. Terry Victor, born June 4, 1947.
 - b. Ann Elizabeth, born March 22, 1950.
 4. Oliver D., born Dec. 3, 1918; married Jan. 10, 1940 to Alice Reany.
 - a. James Oliver, born December 1, 1940.
 - b. John D., born December 8, 1943.
 - c. Thomas Jay, born May 11, 1945.
- C. Clara, born Jan 6, 1889; married Sept. 24, 1908 to Edward Heiser.
1. Ruth, born Aug. 7, 1909; married Feb. 24, 1929 To Aaron Stalter.
 - a. Marilyn Kathryn, born November 18, 1929.
 - b. Minerva Jean, born Aug. 23, 1931; married Feb. 24, 1950 to Carol Birkey.
 - (1) Debra Jean, born November 20, 1951.
 - c. Roger Dean, born September 23, 1933.
 - d. Ronald Duane, born June 11, 1936.
 - e. Richard Dale, born November 7, 1937.
 - f. Robert Eugene, born December 3, 1941.
 - g. David Allen, born February 8, 1945.
 - h. Stephen Joe, born December 9, 1950.
 2. Raymond, born Feb. 10, 1913; married June 1, 1935 to Helen Gangloff.
 - a. Eugene, born April 8, 1937.
 - b. Russel, born October 18, 1942.
 - c. Norman, born October 19, 1948.
 3. Richard, born Jan. 26, 1917; married Jan. 6, 1940 to Doris Allsup.
 4. Pauline E., born May 26, 1920; married June 15, 1941 to Perry Hill.
 - a. Pamela Jean, born November 29, 1947.
 - b. Stephen Perry, born August 7, 1950.
- D. Barbara, born May 9, 1889; married Dec. 29, 1910 to Simon Heiser.
1. Margaret E., born November 4, 1911.
 2. Esther May, born Jan. 18, 1912; married July 29, 1934 to Joseph Roth.
 - a. Barbara Ann, born February 29, 1936.

- b. Sarah Jo, born September 8, 1944.
- 3. Lorene, born Dec. 27, 1914; married Jan. 10, 1932 to John Reimer.
 - a. Robert, born July 4, 1932.
 - b. Jack, born December 10, 1933.
 - c. Johnnie, born June 9, 1935.
 - d. Linda, born September 13, 1944.
 - e. Janice, born August 10, 1946.
 - f. James Edward, born June 21, 1950.
- 4. Dorothy, born June 14, 1918; married May 26, 1939, to Otis Nofziger.
 - a. David, born June 26, 1945.
- 5. Robert Dale, born Sept. 28, 1920; died March 16, 1921.

E. Katie Marie, born June 28, 1891; married Dec. 16, 1915 to Charles Ackerman.

- 1. Lavern R., born May 28, 1917; married Oct. 29, 1936 to Caroline Risser.
 - a. Coral Irean, born August 31, 1937.
 - b. Roy Lynn, born August 12, 1939.
 - c. Mark Phillip, born November 23, 1943.
 - d. Neil Lavern, born May 14, 1946.
- 2. Eileen, born Nov. 21, 1919; married June 18, 1938 to Vernon Smith.
 - a. Janet Marie, born May 18, 1941.
 - b. Vernon Charles, born April 11, 1943.
 - c. Elaine Kay, born February 19, 1945.
 - d. Lonnie Lamare, born November 2, 1946.

F. Florence, born April 6, 1893; married Aug. 20, 1930 to Edward Kinsinger.

G. William C. born April 4, 1894; married Nov. 15, 1917 to Irene Nevin.

- 1. Robert, born Jan. 28, 1927, married Feb. 12, 1949 to Patricia McGuire.
 - a. Deborah, born February 22, 1951.

H. Christian S., born Jan. 12, 1896; married March 4, 1922 to Amelia Hartman.

- 1. Shirley F., born April 15, 1923; married Feb. 27, 1943 to Vernon Schulthes.
 - a. June Shirley, born July 19, 1949.

2. Doris, born Sept. 6, 1927; married Oct. 17, 1948 to James Riley.

a. Larry James, born September 6, 1950.

3. Phyllis Louise, born Dec. 29, 1929; married Jan. 10, 1952 to Norman Smith.

I. Emma, born May 7, 1897; married Sept. 16, 1916 to Clayton Guth who died June 1, 1921; married Dec. 16, 1933 to August Rostetter.

1. Marylee Guth, born March 31, 1918; married Sept. 23, 1940 to Don Rider.

a. Sherwood, born December 4, 1941.

b. Kathryne Sue, born October 20, 1947.

c. Mary Elizabeth, born May 12, 1949.

2. Sherwood Clayton Guth, born May 8, 1921; died September 21, 1921.

3. Luke Rostetter, born October 25, 1935.

J. Henry, born September 17, 1898.

K. Anna, born Sept. 6, 1900; married Oct. 9, 1920 to Clarence Buck.

1. Clarence, Jr., born March 31, 1922; married in April 1942 to Mina May Simmons.

a. Michael, born December 13, 1942.

b. Sandra May, born August 12, 1944.

c. Carol Ann, born July 28, 1947.

V Fannie, born April 25, 1861; died 1937; married in 1878 to Samuel Ulrich who died Dec. 20, 1936.

A. Peter R., born Nov. 13, 1878; married in 1908 to Eurette Pollock.

1. Rosa, born December 22, 1908; died in 1909.

2. Berniece Irene, born Jan. 9, 1910; married in 1932 to Roy Martin.

a. Gayle Le Roy, born June 1, 1934.

b. Leon, born October 1, 1938.

3. Violet, born Dec. 19, 1913; married in 1933 to John Edwards.

4. Carol, born Sept. 12, 1912, married in 1936 to Leo Stanger.

a. George, born July 5, 1937.

b. Dennis, born June 4, 1939.

c. Leanna, born October 8, 1943.

5. Vesta Cleo, born April 30, 1917; married in 1939 to Cecil Montgomery.
 - a. Allen, born December 3, 1939.
 - b. Bonnie, born April 12, 1941.
 - (c. Carolyn, born February 27, 1942.
- TWINS
 - (d. Marilyn, born Feb. 27, 1942; died at birth.
6. Willard, born May 18, 1919; married in 1939 to Olive Wilkins.
 - a. Linda Louise, born September 10, 1941.
 - b. Myrna Elaine, born August 1, 1943.
 - c. Joy, born Mar. 14, 1948; died April 3, 1948.
 - d. Stanley Robert, adopted son born June 27, 1949.
7. Mary, born June 8, 1921; married in 1940 to Emil Wolt.
 - a. Barbara, born May 13, 1941.
 - b. Eddie, born June 1, 1942.
 - c. Terril Bruce, born July 12, 1946.
 - d. Gary Duane, born September 5, 1949.
8. Gerald, born Oct. 23, 1924; married in 1944 to Arlene Brock.
 - a. Steve Gerald, born August 30, 1945.
 - b. Jay Brock, born September 14, 1947.
9. Robert, born March 11, 1935.

B. Christian P., born May 18, 1880; married in 1907 to Alta Pollock.

1. Junius, born Sept. 14, 1907; married in 1937 to Nelda Fay.
 - a. Beverly Elaine, born January 10, 1939.
 - b. Janet Carol, born April 13, 1940.
 - c. Billie Junius, born July 10, 1943.
2. Ina Mae, born Sept. 4, 1908; married in 1929 to Orrin Kooy.
 - a. Lorraine Marie, born May 6, 1930.
 - b. John Orrin, born March 8, 1934.
 - c. Melvin, born December 7, 1937.
3. Helen Marie, born March 13, 1910; married in 1938 to Francis Vore.
 - a. John, born May 26, 1940.
 - b. Elizabeth, born August 14, 1943.
 - c. Barbara, born April 3, 1941.
 - d. Mary, born November 19, 1944.

4. Martha Alta, born Sept. 28, 1912; married in 1935 to Robert McArthur.
 - a. Geneva, born January 4, 1936.
 - b. Lucille, born March 26, 1938.
 - c. Margaret, born February 15, 1944.
 - d. Robert Andrew, born April 21, 1952.
 5. Esther Thelma, born Feb. 13, 1922; married in 1942 to Frank Brown.
 - a. Mary Anne, born November 27, 1942.
 - b. Bettie Jo, born March 18, 1944.
 - c. William, born August 14, 1945.
 - d. Thomas Christian, born July 24, 1947.
 6. Vera Anne, born June 20, 1925; married in 1944 to Paul Barnes.
 - a. Larry, born December 1, 1946.
 - b. Patsy, born October 17, 1948.
 - c. Linda Kay, born July 24, 1951.
- C. Samuel D., born March 11, 1882; married in 1908 to Amanda Nofziger.
1. A son, stillborn in January, 1909.
- D. Ella, born Feb. 22, 1884; died July 1, 1946; married in 1909 to Ruben Burkholder.
1. Harlan Ulrich, born Oct. 10, 1910; married Oct. 10, 1938 to Emma Becker.
 - a. Dennis Allen, born April 21, 1939.
 - b. Gary Lee, born July 21, 1943.
 - c. Joel, born October 4, 1947.
 2. Ellen, born Jan. 30, 1915; married William Barr February 27, 1944.
 - a. Sandra Kay, born September 18, 1944.
 - b. Judith Ellen, born September 18, 1947.
 3. Pauline, born Aug. 20, 1917; married Dec. 15, 1946 to Dexter Milne.
 - a. Thomas Allen, born April 17, 1946.
 - b. Marla Gay, born June 18, 1952.
 4. Dorothy, born March 6, 1922, married April 15, 1949 to Harold Gardiner.
 - a. Gregory Allen, born July 19, 1950.
 5. Victor Ruben, born November 25, 1925.
- E. Anna, born May 28, 1886; married in 1915 to Harvey Yoder.
1. Virgil, born April 22, 1922; died in 1922.

- F. David Daniel, born Sept. 9, 1888; married in 1913 to Della Nofziger.
1. Violet May, foster daughter born Nov. 13, 1928.
- G. Martha, born Jan 26, 1891; married in 1914 to Harry Brandt.
1. Vilas Marvin, born Dec. 9, 1914; married in 1939 to Maxine Gough.
a. Karen Janice, born July 30, 1941.
b. Pamela Beth, born October 17, 1945.
- H. Veronica, born Dec. 8, 1893; married April 10, 1921 to Joe Bill.
1. La Vern, born Dec. 9, 1923; married Howard Hardman on October 22, 1944.
a. Veronica, born December 18, 1948.
b. Lois Ann, born February 27, 1951.
2. Jo Ann, born Nov. 8, 1925; married August 23, 1947 to Jim Gunning.
(a. Mark, born July 9, 1949.
TWINS
(b. Sharon, born July 9, 1949.
3. Marvin Bill, born June 17, 1927; died in 1934.
- I. Joseph, born Nov. 4, 1895; married in 1920 to Ruth Cody.
1. Evelyn, born Feb. 7, 1929; married in 1946 to Keith Bow.
a. Daniel, born February 28, 1948.
b. Steven Sam, born November 20, 1951.
2. Janice, born April 16, 1933; married Oral Wittenborn December 23, 1951-
3. Linda, born January 12, 1944.
- J. Amos, born Sept. 14, 1897; married Sallie Mitchell in 1921.
1. Elsie Marie, born June 13, 1923; married Edward Richter in 1949.
a. Glendarrel Edward, born October 23, 1951.
2. LeRoy Mitchell, born Nov. 14, 1926; married Sarah Martin in 1946.
a. Rosalie Kay, born September 1, 1946.
b. Kenneth LeRoy, born September 9, 1949.
3. Donald Amos, born Aug. 7, 1933; died in 1939.

K. Benjamin, born Feb. 23, 1900; married Reba Grabill in 1947.

L. Nettie, born March 20, 1902.

VI. Barbara, born June 2, 1863; died March 22, 1946; married Dec. 2, 1882, to Benjamin Ummel who died in 1935.

A. Emma, born April 30, 1883; married in Jan. 1907 to Carl Spencer who died in 1937.

1. Carl Leonard, born July 19, 1907; died in 1907.
2. Emma Marcella, born June 28, 1909; married to Clay Daugherty in 1929.
 - a. Byron, born August 16, 1931.
 - b. Peggy Ann, born May 4, 1937.
 - c. Linda Lou, born October 29, 1940.
 - d. James, born November 13, 1946.
3. Doris Edith, born April 1, 1913; died in 1948; married in 1931 to Paul Karr.
 - a. Marjorie Jacqueline, born July 24, 1935; married William Gige in 1949.
 - (1) William Eugene, born February 1, 1950.
 - (2) Allen Preston, born January 1, 1951.
 - b. Carolyn Marie, born February 10, 1937.
 - c. Janice Kay, born May 29, 1941.
 - d. Paul Wayne, born October 23, 1946.
4. Carl Richard, born Aug. 2, 1916; married Doris Spencer in 1936.
 - a. Richard Neal, born April 5, 1940.
 - b. Patty Marlene, born September 30, 1943.
5. Robert, stillborn son, August 4, 1918.
6. Rosemary, born May 9, 1922; married Tracy McCreary in 1945.
 - a. Dennis LeRoy, born March 21, 1949.

B. Rosa, born Dec. 3, 1885; married Henry Shelton September 20, 1905.

1. Dorothy, born Nov. 17, 1907; married Burnice Brown in 1927.
2. Lydia Evelyn, born May 17, 1909; married in
 - a. Roselyn JoAnn, born November 7, 1933.
 - b. Virgil, born November 26, 1948.

3. Lloyd H., born Nov. 26, 1910; married Christine Jones April 21, 1935.
 - a. Lloyd Victor, born March 17, 1938.
 4. Bessie, born in 1912; died in 1913.
 5. Harold Eugene, born Jan. 19, 1915; married Aretha Bogue in 1935.
 - a. Phyllis Jay, born March 12, 1938.
 - b. Arthur Garold, born July 11, 1945.
 - c. Richard Eugene, born November 10, 1946.
 6. Henry Max, born Jan. 24, 1920; married Myrtle Rusher in 1949.
 7. Howard Glen, born Jan. 12, 1923; married Ardis Zent in 1944.
 - a. Howard Wayne, born January 3, 1945.
 - b. Glenda Gloe, born April 4, 1951.
- C. Louie, born Jan. 30, 1887; married Leota Kissinger in 1914.
1. Joseph, born Jan. 22, 1916; married to Leona Stiles in 1945.
 - a. Lynda, born November 2, 1947.
 - b. Kathline, born January 19, 1951.
 2. Adron, born May 7, 1918; died in 1945.
 3. Elvin B., born May 2, 1922.
 4. Helen, born January 9, 1926, died in 1950.
- D. Lydia, born Jan. 20, 1899; married Benjamin Hill in 1907.
1. Marvin, born March 13, 1910; died in 1942; married Selma Grey in 1933.
 - a. John Marvin, born August 18, 1938.
 - b. Annette, born August 14, 1940.
 2. Aileen, born Dec. 30, 1914; married Clyde Fadler in 1937.
 - a. Allen, born November 8, 1938.
 - b. Steven Hill, born May 7, 1946.
- E. William Fredrick, born Mar. 9, 1891; married Sarah Guthrey in 1916.
1. Marie, born June 15, 1920; married Allan Tilton in 1941.
 - a. Donald Allen, born May 14, 1944.
 - b. Dale William, born May 30, 1948.
 2. William, Jr., born June 2, 1923, married Mazelle Chapman in 1943.

3. Hattie Colleen, born February 5, 1931.

F. Peter Jack, born Sept. 30, 1892; died in 1939; married in 1923 to Dorothy Gully who died in 1933.

1. Barbara Sue, born Aug. 28, 1925; married Dr. Roy Garrison in 1945.

a. Roy Gregory, born February 18, 1948.

b. David Keith, born August 9, 1951.

2. Jack Jr., born March 21, 1927.

G. Maud, born Sept. 15, 1898; married in 1921 to James Fagg who died in 1936; married Roy Berry in 1950.

VII Jacob, born July 30, 1865; died in 1941; married in 1889 to Mary Nofziger who died in 1932. Married in Dec. 1938, to Sarah Shoemaker who died in June 1952

A. Simon, born Oct. 4, 1890; married Sadie Schlegel in 1913.

1. Viola Mae, born May 31, 1914; married Leon Mollett in 1934.

a. JoAnn, born July 26, 1935.

b. Jerry, born May 18, 1939.

2. Wilson, born Oct. 23, 1917; married Goldie Beling in 1938.

a. Larry, born May 8, 1939.

b. Thomas, born May 1, 1942.

c. Dale, born February 25, 1951.

3. Marie, born Feb. 4, 1921; married to Abe Schierling in 1941.

a. Darrell, born September 23, 1943.

b. Roy, born October 13, 1946.

c. Sandra, born September 12, 1951.

4. Earl, born Dec. 21, 1923; married Shirley Eagle in 1946.

a. Linda, born November 5, 1947.

5. Robert Dean, born March 14, 1926; married Ione Cilsdorf in 1946.

a. Gary, born December 13, 1948.

b. Marcia, born February 25, 1951.

B. William, born Aug. 4, 1892; married Emma Schrock September 5, 1915.

1. Harvy William, born March 27, 1917; married Norma Hamilton, April 12, 1942.
 - a. Stanley Harvey, born February 25, 1943.
 - b. Sharon Norma, born November 29, 1946.
 - c. Mary Lou, born September 22, 1950.
2. Mary Belle, born Feb. 25, 1919; married to Donald Vaughn, January 8, 1944.
 - a. Roxanna Justine, born April 9, 1941.
 - b. Donald Lawrence, Jr., born April 13, 1949.
 - c. Mark Matheson, born May 26, 1951.
3. Wilma Irene, born January 30, 1921; died March 5, 1921.
4. Ruth Lee, born April 21, 1922; died July 20, 1931.
5. Maynard Lowell, born Aug. 19, 1923; married Gertrude Emmert, September 14, 1946.
 - a. Linda Sheryl, born August 13, 1947.
 - b. Susan Carol, born May 5, 1950.
6. Ethel Arlene, born Nov. 17, 1925; married Francesco Cosco August 5, 1951.
 - a. Ramona Lisa, born October 12, 1952.
7. Clarence Allen, born August 25, 1927.
8. William, Jr., born August 26, 1928; died July 9, 1930.
9. Norman Lewis, born July 8, 1930.
10. Charles Wesley, born November 28, 1931.
11. Robert Gene, born December 6, 1932.
12. Ronald Ray, born January 20, 1934.

C. Lena Ellen, born June 12, 1894; married William Erb in 1913.

1. Lester Willis, born Nov. 9, 1914; married Naomi Roth in 1937.
 - a. Delbert Duane, born October 10, 1938.
 - b. Linda Colleen, born December 27, 1941.
 - c. Pamela Kay, born July 30, 1947.
2. Wilton Robert, born Feb. 15, 1918; married Bernadine Wamsley in 1941.
 - a. Robert Wilton, born June 7, 1942.
 - b. Dennis Richard, born October 20, 1944.
3. Pauline Laverne, born Oct. 22, 1919; died in 1924.
4. Marceil Jean, born Aug. 17, 1921; married Floyd Trimble in 1944.
5. Virginia Louella Mae, born Oct. 21, 1923; married Arthur Barksdale in 1945.
 - a. Larry Stephen, born September 16, 1947.

- b. Judith Marlene, born December 20, 1949.
- 6. Mary Ellen, born May 2, 1927; married James Patterson in 1951.
 - a. Becky Lou, born November 3, 1952.

D. Jesse, born August 5, 1896.

E. Dewey Earl, born May 16, 1898; married Lucy Broadbeck, August 2, 1925.

- TWINS
- (1. Virginia Mae, born May 28, 1926; married Alfred Scrivner, May 28, 1948.
 - (2. Eleanor Mae, born May 28, 1926; married Harry Kemp March 20, 1948.
 - a. Carol Jean, born April 7, 1950.
 - b. Steven Allen, born December 23, 1951.
 - 3. Marion Elizabeth, born Nov. 2, 1927; married Ray Foerstahl November 19, 1950.
 - a. Julie Ann, born October 11, 1948.
 - 4. Merle Wallace, born July 28, 1929; married Joan Herndon September 8, 1950.
 - 5. Barbara Jean, born October 11, 1932.
 - 6. Wilma Louise, born July 13, 1936.
 - 7. Shirley Ann, born September 25, 1938.

F. Edward Louis, born April 12, 1900; married Ada Schlegel in 1923.

- 1. Lauralea, born Dec. 27, 1923; married Elmer Clum in 1945.
 - a. Karen Nan, born December 25, 1946.
 - b. John Frank, born November 26, 1947.
 - c. Theodore Edward, born November 17, 1949.
- 2. Carol Nan, born May 5, 1926; married Arthur Shelton in 1949.
 - a. Deanne Lee, born September 20, 1952.
- 3. Willis Edward, born February 1, 1929.

G. Jennie Mae, born June 22, 1902; married Elmer Erb in 1920.

- 1. Kenneth Lyle, born June 19, 1921; married Jean Hanson in 1947.
 - a. Kimberly Charles, born October 27, 1948.
 - b. David Elmer, born May 7, 1951.
- 2. Betty Jean, born March 15, 1923; married Edward McKee in 1942.
 - a. Michael Brian, born June 25, 1944.

- b. Gregory Preston, born August 1, 1947.
- c. Kathleen Ann, born June 2, 1951.
- 3. Richard Deane, born Mar. 11, 1927; married Shirley Johnson in 1951.
- 4. Donna Lee, born Sept. 18, 1928; married Delton Moen in 1947.
 - a. Sherida Lee, born August 5, 1948.
 - b. Carla Jill, born December 12, 1949.
 - c. Kevin Michael, born August 15, 1951.
- 5. Darrel Elmer, born October 31, 1930.

H. Alta Marie, born July 22, 1904; married Ezra Widmer in 1926.

- 1. James Royce, born Nov. 2, 1927; married Patricia Tyser in 1947.
 - a. James Royce, Jr., born June 28, 1948.
 - b. Lorna Christine, born May 29, 1951.
- 2. Gordon Leon, born March 13, 1930; married Joan Haberle in 1950.
 - a. Darlene Marie, born Dec. 28, 1951.
- 3. Ardys Marie, born January 27, 1936.
- 4. Carol Jean, born December 15, 1938.

I. Cecil Vilas, born Feb. 13, 1907; married Lillian Mae Burman in 1938.

- 1. Gary Wallace, born August 14, 1939.
- 2. Gale Dean, born September 5, 1940.

J. Walter Monroe, born April 17, 1909; married Irene Elizabeth Nance in 1933.

- 1. Beverly Irene, born May 7, 1935.
- 2. Donald Walter, born May 25, 1938.

K. Harold Ray, born Jan. 28, 1911; married Ida Mae Clum in 1939.

VIII Samuel, born April 21, 1867; died in 1942; married Frances Reel in 1892.

A. Lydia, born Sept. 24, 1893, married John Holliger in 1916.

- 1. Raymond, born July 3, 1923; married Olive May Goodyear in 1942.
 - a. Connie Linn, born May 10, 1943.
 - b. Sandra Kay, born March 13, 1946.

- c. Janet Sue, born June 15, 1948.
 - 2. Margaret, born Feb. 17, 1925; married Paul Joos in 1943.
 - a. Patricia Ann, born in January, 1945.
 - b. Robert Paul, born in July, 1946.
 - 3. Robert Dale, born April 12, 1928; died in 1933.
 - 4. Freida Louise, born Oct. 12, 1930; married Berwin Allen in 1949.
 - a. Terry, born in August 1947.
 - b. David, born in September 1949.
 - c. Garey, born in January 1951.
 - 5. Samuel Ivan, born in Oct., 1926; married Laura Lane in 1947.
 - a. Jerri, born in April 1949.
 - b. Kathy, born in May, 1951.
 - 6. Kathryn Elsie, born Feb. 25, 1933; married Eugene Koch in February 1950.
 - a. Diana, born in September 1950.
 - b. Dennis, born in March, 1952.
 - 7. Louis, born March 6, 1935.
 - 8. Clyde, born October 25, 1937.
- B. William Edward, born Jan. 2, 1895, married Emma Moser in 1920.
- 1. Dorothy Eileen, born Jan. 12, 1921; married Marion Aeschliman in 1941.
 - a. Patricia Kay, born February 19, 1942.
 - b. Ronald Edward, born September 23, 1944.
 - c. Marylin Ruth, born September 8, 1951.
 - 2. Marie, born Jan. 16, 1924, married Charles Petrosky in 1946.
 - a. Joan, born May 21, 1947.
 - b. Charles William, born April 28, 1949.
 - c. Valerie Anne, born February 19, 1951.
 - 3. William Jr., born Sept. 30, 1925; died in 1945.
 - 4. Edna Frances, born April 11, 1929.
 - 5. Richard Christian, born December 14, 1931.
 - 6. Franklin Donald, born January 26, 1935.
 - 7. Linda Lee, born March 15, 1942.
- C. Louis, born Jan. 31, 1897; married Leah Sharp in 1917.
- 1. Ralph Samuel, born Dec. 7, 1917; married Minnie Reeder in 1937.
 - a. Robert Lee, born March 24, 1942.

- b. Darrel Ralph, born May 14, 1945.
 - 2. Harold Louis, born Sept. 24, 1919; married Violet Landes in 1941.
 - a. Harold Jr., born July 25, 1943; died Feb. 20, 1949.
 - b. Douglas Bruce, born March 20, 1945.
 - 3. Hulda Maurine, born March 5, 1921; married Raymond Heinold in 1939.
 - a. Duane Louis, born December 30, 1940.
 - b. Joan Maurine, born April 17, 1945.
 - 4. Leah Kathryn, born May 30, 1922; married Byron Jarrett in 1945.
 - TWINS (a. Donald Edward, born Dec. 27, 1944.
 - (b. Edward Byron, born Dec. 27, 1944.
 - c. Sharon Kay, born March 3, 1947.
 - 5. Esther Margaret, born Jan. 2, 1924; married Donald Mooberry in 1945.
 - a. Richard Earl, born July 30, 1947.
 - b. Larry Dean, born October 2, 1949.
 - 6. Lena Ruth, born December 24, 1930.
 - 7. Helen Ethel, born March 4, 1933.
- D. Levi, born March 8, 1899, married Esther Blaine in 1917.
- 1. Raymond, born June 3, 1918; died Nov. 22, 1943.
 - 2. Frances, born Oct. 7, 1921; married John Rosenberg, April 27, 1947.
 - a. Donald Wright, born Sept. 16, 1949.
 - b. Linda Sue, born November 2, 1940.
 - c. Ronald Levi, born April 5, 1943.
 - 3. Maxine, born Feb. 16, 1923; married Ronald Moreland, June 28, 1940.
 - a. Edward LeRoy, born February 3, 1941.
 - b. Suzanne Kay, born August 11, 1946.
 - c. Teresa Maxine, born March 28, 1948.
 - d. Rhonda Louise, born September 15, 1949.
 - e. Kathy Lynn, born August 9, 1951.
 - 4. Jack, born November 9, 1930..
 - 5. Donald, born July 12, 1932.
- E. Benjamin, born December 5, 1901.
- F. Nellie, born Feb. 23, 1904; married George Blaine in 1920.
- 1. Eugene Curtis, born Jan. 24, 1921; married

Charlotte Schafer in 1945.

a. Carl Eugene, born November 27, 1946.

b. Elaine K., born September 5, 1948.

2. Gladys Kathrine, born March 8, 1923; married Alfred Ludwig in 1941.

a. Charles, born December 27, 1942.

b. Kenneth, born April 29, 1945.

c. Sally Jane, born May 9, 1950.

3. Mary Jane, born Aug. 9, 1925; married Harold Hunsinger, July 16, 1945.

a. Peggie Ann, born December 30, 1946.

b. Karen June, born September 13, 1948.

c. Robert John, born April 25, 1952.

4. James Howard, born July 21, 1930.

5. William Charles, born January 13, 1933.

G. George, born April 10, 1906; married Faye Cawley in 1929.

1. Loren, born Dec. 19, 1931; married Barbara Buerkett in 1951.

2. Roger Earl, born September 17, 1934.

3. Max Samuel, born September 4, 1938.

H. Lena Ruth, born Feb. 7. 1908; married Walter Johnson in 1943.

I. Charles Samuel, born July 22, 1910; married Lena Zimmerman in 1936.

1. Ray Charles, born December 16, 1940.

2. Samuel Lee, born April 27, 1943.

3. Albert, born March 3, 1947.

J. Verna Marie, born Jan. 24, 1913; married Charles Kautzi, in 1935.

1. Wesley Charles, born February 27, 1948.

K. Elsie Frances, born Feb. 22, 1915; married Charles Waters in 1945.

1. Karen Lillian, born Aug. 1, 1947.

IX Magdalena, born May 1, 1869, married William Plaag in 1921.

X Benjamin, born Oct. 16, 1871, married Jan. 31, 1899 to Clara Reel who died in 1934.

A. Florence Elizabeth, born March 31, 1899; married Guilford Zook, June 30, 1919.

1. Guilford David, Jr., born May 23, 1920.

2. Marjorie Ann, born Dec. 20, 1923; married Roland Hoffman in 1942.

a. Edward Earl, born April 5, 1942.

b. James David, born April 8, 1946.

c. Suzanne Renee, born March 12, 1950.

d. Dianne Jane, born October 11, 1951.

3. Lois Ilene, born March 25, 1929.

B. Leila Mae, born Aug. 4, 1900; married Fred Knapp April 30, 1919.

1. Lucille Eulalia, born May 24, 1920; married Tillman Blunier in 1943.

a. Dennis Lynn, born June 4, 1947.

2. Maurice Donald, born May 9, 1921; married Helen Leuthold in 1943.

a. David Lee, adopted son, born Nov. 20, 1946.

b. Barbara Ray, adopted daughter, born Sept. 25, 1950.

3. Wilbur Ralph, born Oct. 9, 1922; married Virginia Therio in 1946.

a. Larry James, born December 13, 1946.

b. Connie Lynn, born Aug. 25, 1950.

4. Kathryn Elnora, born Oct. 21, 1924; married Eugene Funk in 1945.

a. Leila Kay, born September 13, 1946.

b. Keith Eugene, born April 26, 1949.

5. Mary Eileen, born June 4, 1926; married Edward Steffen in 1946.

a. Lonnie Lee, born Oct. 11, 1949.

b. Yvonne Sue, born April 29, 1952.

6. Clyde Richard, born March 26, 1928; married Leanna Garber in 1949.

a. Gary Ray, born February 8, 1950.

b. Sandra Kay, born May 10, 1951.

7. Fredrick James, born Oct. 11, 1929; married Marjorie Farney in 1950.

a. Rickey Adair, born July 25, 1951.

8. Loren Edward, born November 7, 1930.

9. Robert Lee, born April 29, 1933.

10. Gerald Wayne, born May 30, 1934.
11. Kenneth Dean, born October 28, 1935.

C. Clarence Harvey, born Feb. 28, 1904; married Margaret Daniel in 1938.

D. Susie Mabel, born Nov. 24, 1907; married Carl Thrailkill, June 2, 1929.

1. Carol Sue, born April 10, 1933.

(E. Rachel, born April 22, 1913; died at birth.

TWINS

(F. Ruth Marie, born April 22, 1913; married Dale Creasy in 1937.

1. Clarence Dean, born December 18, 1938.
2. Molly Ann, born January 25, 1943.

G. Flossie Mae, born Dec. 21, 1915; married Reathal Whan in 1939.

1. Stephen Reathal, born March 14, 1943.
2. Frederick Guy, born September 24, 1948.

H. Dorothy Lorraine, born Aug. 18, 1920; married George Steel in 1937.

1. Ann Renee, born May 25, 1940.
2. Forrest George, born May 25, 1942.

I. Vernon Levi, born July 29, 1923; married Loretta Adams in 1944.

1. Sandra Kay, born May 20, 1945.
2. Jack B., born March 8, 1947.
3. Michael G., born February 28, 1951.

XI David, born Nov. 28, 1873; married in 1898 to Ellen Miller who died in 1944.

A. Charlie M., born Sept. 13, 1899; married Frances Stutzman in 1929.

1. Norma Charlene, born Aug. 20, 1932, died in 1950.
2. Margaret Joan, born January 29, 1935.
3. (Donna June, born June 1, 1937.
Twins
4. (Deane Loren, born June 1, 1937.

B. Jacob M., born Feb. 16, 1902; married Lorene Stahly in 1929.

1. Kenneth Lee, born October 14, 1932.

2. Donald Eugene, born August 9, 1934.

3. (Robert Dale, born May 31, 1934. ⁶

TRIPLETS (A daughter stillborn, May 31, 1936.

5. (A daughter stillborn, May 31, 1936.

6. Larry Gean, born May 7, 1944.

7. Patty Jean, born October 21, 1945.

C. Lester M., born Feb. 7, 1905; married Lucille Rengel in 1933.

1. Marilyn Arlene, born November 3, 1933.

2. Shirley Jean, born August 10, 1935.

3. Lois Jean, born October 8, 1938.

4. Joyce Joan, born February 8, 1946; died May 25, 1948.

5. Jerry Eugene, born October 8, 1948.

D. Esral M., born April 26, 1907; married Ella Kapferschmid, December 27, 1941.

1. Randall Lee, born September 25, 1942.

E. Murray M., born Oct. 11, 1909; married Helen Rich, August 19, 1934.

1. Sharon Sue, born May 4, 1942.

2. Sheila Helen, born September 1, 1946.

XII (Andrew, born May 1, 1877, died in August 1877.
TWINS

XIII (Peter Elmer, born May 1, 1877; married in 1899 to Eva Roberts, who died in 1932; married in 1920 to Clara Vogel who died in 1948.

A. Nellie Gladys, born Sept. 23, 1900; married Thurman Boswell, in 1931.

1. Bill Reeser, born November 5, 1934.

2. Thurla Evalena, born February 19, 1937.

CHART OF THE DESCENDANTS OF CHRISTIAN REESER

I. Children	A. Grand-children	1. Great-Grand-children	a. Great-Great-Grand-children	(1). Great-Great-Great-Grandchildren	Total in Each Family
(John)*	3	6 (1)*	9	2	20
(Annie)	11 (2)	48 (2)	80 (2)	5	144
(Joseph)	4	4	7	-	15
(Christian B.)	11 (1)	23 (3)	45	1	80
(Fannie)	12 (1)	33 (5)	59 (2)	-	104
(Barbara)	7 (1)	24 (7)	29	2	62
(Jacob)	11	46 (4)	46	-	103
(Samuel)	11	40 (3)	45 (1)	-	96
Magdalena	-	-	-	-	-
Benjamin	9 (1)	24	16	-	49
David	5	19 (4)	-	-	24
Peter	1	2	-	-	3
(Andrew)	-	-	-	-	-

GRAND TOTAL:

Children — 13 (9)
 Grandchildren — 85 (6)
 Great-Grandchildren — 269 (29)
 Great-Great-Grandchildren — 336 (5)
 Great-Great-Great-Grandchildren — 10

Total of all descendants — 713 (49)

Total descendants living — 664

*Parentheses around names indicate those who have died. Numbers in parentheses show how many deaths have occurred within each block.

7041 0

